सत्यमेव जयते

Translation Today

Volume 17, Issue 1, 2023

A UGC CARE List Journal

NTM

राष्ट्रीय अनुवाद मिशन
NATIONAL TRANSLATION MISSION
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

Editor
TARIQ KHAN

Publication Policy

Translation Today (TT) is a double-blind peer-reviewed, indexed and refereed journal of the National Translation Mission (NTM). This has been listed in the UGC approved list of journals. It follows the standard publishing norms and therefore, invites original and unpublished submissions in the following categories:

- Research article
- Book Review
- Academic interview
- Disciplinary dialogue
- Annotated bibliography

Vision

- Seeks a spurt in translation research.
- Seeks excellence in dialogues and communications involving translations.
- Seeks to further the frontiers of Translation Studies and its adjacent disciplines.
- Seeks to foreground a host of practices and technologies relevant to translation.
- Seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of Translation Studies and its neighboring fields.

Submissions

The Translation Today Journal welcomes theoretical and practice-oriented submissions in all streams of thought relevant to Translation Studies, Interpretation Studies, and Adaptation Studies. The focus of the journal includes research in the following areas: translation tools & technology, translation education & training, translation evaluation & accreditation, scientific & technical terminology, translation memory & equivalents, machine-aided & automated translation, ontology and localization. Submissions embodying conceptual and empirical research such as articles, papers, interviews, notes, squibs are encouraged. Annotated bibliography and review of recently-published books on Translation Studies, Interpretation Studies and Adaptation Studies are also welcome. Translation Today is a member of Crossref. Contents published in this journal carry a unique DOI and are licensed under Creative Commons. The journal is indexed in MLA International Bibliography, MIAR, Directory of Research Jounral Index (DRJI), Citefactor, ABCD, Translation Studies Bibliography (TSB) of John Benjamin, International Scientific Indexing (ISI), ERIH PLUS and COSMOS.

For submissions and queries, please write to:

Project Director
National Translation Mission,
Central Institute of Indian Languages,
Hunsur road, Manasagangotri, Mysuru-570006.
E-mail: projectdirector.ntm[AT]gmail[DOT]com, cc to:
ntmtranslationtoday[AT]gmail[DOT]com ntmtranslationtoday[AT]gmail[DOT]com
Phone: 0821-2345212/0821-2345217

Translation Today

Editor

TARIQ KHAN

Volume 17, Issue 1
2023

National Translation Mission
Central Institute of Indian Languages
Mysuru

Editor

TARIQ KHAN

Officer in Charge, NTM

Assistant Editors

GEETHAKUMARY V., NTM, CIIL **ADITYA K. PANDA**, NTM, CIIL

Editorial Board

SUSAN BASSNETT
University of Warwick,
Coventry, United Kingdom

JEREMY MUNDAY
University of Leeds, Leeds,
United Kingdom

HARISH TRIVEDI
University of Delhi,
New Delhi, India

ANTHONY PYM
The Rovirai Virgili University,
Tarragona, Spain

MICHAEL CRONIN
Dublin University,
Dublin, Ireland

PANCHANAN MOHANTY
Nalanda University,
Rajgir, Bihar, India

DOUGLAS ROBINSON
Hongkong Baptist University,
Hong Kong, China

LAKSHMI HARIBANDI
English and Foreign Languages
University, Hyderabad, India

SHERRY SIMON
Concordia University, Montreal,
Quebec, Canada

MIKI NISHIOKA
Osaka University,
Osaka, Japan

ALAIN DESOULIERES
INALCO, USPC, CERLOM
Research Centre, Paris, France

SUSHANT KUMAR MISHRA
Nalanda University,
Rajgir, Bihar, India

JORGE DÍAZ-CINTAS
University College London,
London, United Kingdom

BINHUA WANG
University of Leeds, Leeds,
United Kingdom

YVES GAMBIER
University of Turku,
Turku, Finland

JOHN CHUN YIN WONG
The University of Hong Kong,
Hong Kong, China

ŁUCJA BIEL
University of Warsaw,
Warsaw, Poland

SAEED AMERI
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad,
Mashhad, Iran

ISABELLE ROBERT
University of Antwerp,
Antwerp, Belgium

IAIN BOYD WHYTE
University of Edinburgh,
Edinburgh, Scotland

JUI-CHING WALLACE CHEN
Middlebury Institute of
International Studies, Monterey,
USA

ROSARIO MARTIN RUANO
University of Salamanca,
Salamanca, Spain

WANG LIDI
Chinese University of Hong Kong,
Shenzhen, China

The Translation Today journal is abstracted / indexed in the following databases:

UGC CARE List	विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग University Grants Commission quality higher education for all
Crossref	Crossref
MLA International Bibliography	MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION
MIAR	UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA MIAR
Directory of Research Jounral Index (DRJI)	DRJI
Citefactor	CiteFactor Academic Scientific Journals
ABCD	ABCD
Translation Studies Bibliography (TSB) of John Benjamin	JOHN BENJAMINS PUBLISHING COMPANY Translation Studies Bibliography
International Scientific Indexing (ISI)	ISI INTERNATIONAL Scientific Indexing
ERIH PLUS	ERIH PLUS EUROPEAN REFERENCE INDEX FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
COSMOS	Cosmos

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES
Manasagangotri, Mysuru, Karnataka, India- 570006
www.ciil.org

Translation Today, Volume 17, Issue 1

ISSN: 0972-8740
e-ISSN: 0972-8090

Editor: Tariq Khan

© National Translation Mission, CIIL, Mysuru, 2023

ntmtranslationtoday@gmail.com
projectdirector.ntm@gmail.com
www.ntm.org.in/languages/English/translationtoday.aspx

One-year subscription: ₹500; $100; €80; £60 excluding postage (air-mail)

Publisher: Shailendra Mohan

Production Team
Officer-in-Charge, Publication Unit: Aleendra Brahma
Printing Supervision: H. Manohara, G. Sandhya Nayak &
M. N. Chandrashekar

Cover Design: Nandakumar L
Layout: Seethalakshmi M. L

Printed at CIIL, Printing Press, Mysuru

Contents

Editorial…..……...……..……...……...……...……...… ix

Articles

(Re)mapping the Inter-Philosophical Trajectories of Feminist Translation Theory and Praxis
JHARANA RANI DHANGADAMAJHI…….…….… 1

Translating Women in Sethu's Malayalam Fiction into English: The Issue of Cultural Gaps
AMMU MARIA ASHOK & UDAYA NARAYANA SINGH……..…. 21

Retranslation as Re-vision and Self-Reflective Criticism: A Comparative Analysis of Two Translations of Agnisakshi from Malayalam to English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan
CHYTHAN ANN GEORGE & SRIPARNA DAS……. 45

The 'Translated' Cityscape: A Study of Select Satyajit Ray Films
CHANDRANI CHATTERJEE…….……... 63

Investigating the Translation of Arabic Conventional Implicatures into English
EKREMA SHEHAB & ABDUL-RAHMAN QADAN…..…….…… 83

The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu Context
ELIGEDI RAJKUMAR…….…..……...……. 113

Punjabi-English Literary Translation: Challenges and Possibilities
KULVEER KAUR…….…….……. 135

Interviews

Translating the Margins: An Interview with V. Ramaswamy-the Translator Spy
UTSARGA GHOSH & UMESH KUMAR……..…….. 157

Book Reviews

Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire
Reviewed by RIFAT ARA KHATUN & H S KOMALESHA…… 177

Annotated Bibliographies

An Annotated Bibliography of Select Translation Studies Books Published in 2022
JATINDER KUMAR……..……..……..…….... 187

Contributors……..……..……..……..…….... 199

Editorial

The concept of translation has moved beyond its traditional boundaries and scaled new altitudes. It is no longer anchored to one harbor as it is moving with its currents and cross-currents from one paradigm to another, from a discipline to another and becoming multi-centered, multi-lingual, multi-disciplinary so on and so forth. Practicing translators and scholars of Translation Studies have caused translation to unfold its vividness and heterogeneity. This issue of the *Translation Today* witnesses some cutting-edge research and revisits some scholarships already explored. This issue highlights the emerging areas of Feminist Translation Studies.

The first paper titled *(Re)mapping the Inter-Philosophical Trajectories of Feminist Translation Theory and Praxis* by Jharana Rani Dhangadamajhi, puts forth the argument that feminist translation is located in the theoretical premises of three major turns: poststructuralism, postcolonialism and feminism. The second paper titled *Translating Women in Sethu's Malayalam Fiction into English: The Issue of Cultural Gaps* is by Ammu Maria Ashok and Udaya Narayana Singh. The authors discuss the cultural gaps in the treatment of women in the English translation of Sethu's Malayalam fiction. The third paper in this issue titled *Retranslation as Re-vision and Self-Reflective Criticism: A Comparative Analysis of Two Translations of Agnisakshi from Malayalam to English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan* is by Chythan Ann George and Sriparna Das. They discuss retranslation as an act of revision and self-reflective criticism. The fourth paper titled *The 'Translated' Cityscape: A Study of Select Satyajit Ray Films* by Chandrani Chatterjee, studies the translational aspects of city by discussing the translational nature of Satyajit Ray's two films namely *Mahanagar* and *Pratidwandi*. The fifth paper titled *Investigating the Translation of Arabic Conventional Implicatures into English* is by Ekrema Shehab and Abdul-Rahman Qadan. This paper studies the translation of Arabic conventional implicatures into English.The sixth paper titled *The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu*

Context is by Eligedi Rajkumar. This paper discusses the ideologies of agents in using translation as a political instrument to construct feminist discourse in the Telugu context. The seventh paper titled *Punjabi-English Literary Translation: Challenges and Possibilities* by Kulveer Kaur, discusses the challenges that a translator comes across while doing Punjabi English literary translation and the approaches used in such translations.

This issue carries an academic interview titled *Translating the Margins: An Interview with V. Ramaswamy - the Translator Spy* by Utsarga Ghosh and Umesh Kumar. This academic interview is followed by a book review of *Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire* by Rifat Ara Khatun and H S Komalesha. This issue also features an Annotated Bibliography of Select Translation Studies Books Published in 2022 by Jatinder Kumar.

Translation Today has become an exemplary journal in the field of Translation Studies at home and abroad. It is turning every stone to provide qualitative and noteworthy items in the form of articles, book reviews and interviews. It is marching on with the support of scholars and the esteemed editorial board members. We are highly grateful to all who have been supporting us in the noble journey of knowledge adventure.

Have a deep reading!

Tariq Khan

***

(Re)mapping the Inter-Philosophical Trajectories of Feminist Translation Theory and Praxis

JHARANA RANI DHANGADAMAJHI

Abstract

The much celebrated and visibly interventionist Feminist translation theories and praxis that challenged the canonical norms of western translation theories more radically and heralded in the era of resignification in the field of gender and/in translation, is not an isolated upsurging of English experimental translation practices of Quebec feminist writings. Rather, like every text is intertextual in the poststructuralist frame work, the present paper seeks to argue that every philosophy is inter-philosophical, and the philosophical core of feminist translation is located in the theoretical premises of three major turns in literary and cultural studies i.e., poststructuralism, postcolonialism and feminism. Thus in the present paper an attempt is made to map the philosophical trajectories of poststructuralism, postcolonialism and feminism(s) to unearth those radical theories, concepts and categories that ultimately paved the way for the emergence of Feminist translation theory(s) and practice(s).

Keywords: Feminist Translation, Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism, Feminism.

Feminist Translation: An Introduction

Feminist translation, as the name suggests, is a self-consciously feminist and political approach to translation, translating, and translation studies (Discipline) that seeks to- a) interrogate the canonical norms of translating a text, b) investigate the issues of gender in/and translation, c) re-imagine the identity of the woman translator concerning the text and the author, and d) provide viable

strategies to produce a feminist translation of the text. Up until the last decade of the twentieth century, especially in the western (Anglo-American) context, translation (product) was judged based on 'fidelity towards the original,' 'transparency,' 'fluency' and 'easy readability' (Venuti 1995: 1). Such translation was seen as mere 'rewriting of the original' or the 'servile imitation' of the original to convey the precise meaning of the original text. Similarly, the body/figure that invested the intellectual labour in translating the text was also judged negatively by the reader, publisher and the market for any creative and critical intervention. Therefore, the figure of the translator remained hidden as the 'invisible Other' of the author. This secondary position that was given to translation and the translator provoked feminist translators to challenge the canonical discourses of translation theories.

Moreover, these feminist translators were convinced that there was a correspondence between women's position in society and the position of translation in literature, art and culture. Therefore, they started the debate of 'gender and/in translation.' As feminist researchers, one of the significant areas of concern for them was to reinvestigate the 'man-handling' of the translated text written by women authors. This they did by critiquing the phallogocentric nature of language that privileges the phallus and masculinity and undermine the female and femininity. Thus, it is part of their agenda to make the gendered body of the character and the translator visible inside the text through various strategies like, 'écriture féminine' 'supplementing,' 'hijacking,' 'footnoting,' 'wordplay,' 'prefacing' (von Flotow 1991: 74). In other words, they advocated for 'woman-handling' (Godard) of the feminist text by the feminist translator.

Furthermore, internationalising the woman writer's voice belonging to a foreign language and culture is also part of their agenda. And for this, they appealed to women translators to translate lesser-known women writers of different/marginalised source languages. Thus, with these agendas in mind, a group of academic feminist researchers and translators, launched the radical interventionist feminist translation in theory and practice in Canada. Feminist translation, over time, has significantly expanded its theoretical concerns to incorporate the issues of transnational

feminism and intersectionality and seems to have captured the market with its practical application of these theories, as can be seen from the increasing number of feminist translations and adaptations of texts. Feminist translation emerged from the philosophical core discussed above.

Feminist Translation: Philosophical and Political Genesis

Speaking of the philosophical core, feminist translation did not emerge in a vacuum. Like every text is intertextual, every philosophy is inter-philosophical, and feminist translation resulted from various philosophical/political turns in feminism and translation studies. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of various critical, political, and cultural theories that have been crucial in deconstructing every other essential notion about 'author,' 'text,' 'language' and 'meaning,' thus providing the required lens and scope to interrogate the foundational principles of translation theories and practices. Feminist translation theory(s) and practices, a radical-deconstructive-political-interventionist approach to translation/ translating, also emerged at the confluence of such critical theories as, Postcolonialism, Poststructuralism and Postmodernism. It is therefore imperative to map the contours of the Postcolonial, Poststructural and feminist theories that shaped the philosophical trajectories of 'Feminist Translation Studies'.

Poststructuralism and Translation Studies

'Deconstruction,' with its critical approach to theories of text, textuality, authorship, and originality, is one of the significant contributions of poststructuralism to the field of Translation Studies that challenged the 'secondary position' that was previously assigned to translation and heralded in the era of resignification of translation and assigning more value to Translation Studies as a discipline in the last decade of the twentieth century. As Rosemary Arrojo (1998) has rightly pointed out Translation Studies, under the influence of post structuralism, in the last decade of the twentieth century, took a philosophical turn to interrogate the established

boundaries in its age-old theoretical formulations, "as we regard translation as a form of transformation, we finally begin to move beyond the old stalemates which have paralysed reflection on the area for at least two thousand years" (25). According to Kim Wallmach (2006),

> Poststructuralist approaches support a view of theory and practice as dialogically related, a view where neither concept governs the other but where both function as contesting and complimentary, as dialogical forces within the discourse. Theory and practice, in such a view, are not thought of as essences or discrete functions or operations; rather, they are seen to represent theoretical formulations of positions which in practice can be applied only temporarily and alternately (5).

'Deconstruction,' one of the critical concepts in poststructuralist theories, and popularised by Jacques Derrida, questions the stated boundaries established in language, in writing practices and reading strategies by pointing out the inherent contradiction that lies in specific theories; 'definition' of a concept itself delimits the proposition made by a specific theory:

> The subject of translation theory has traditionally involved some concept of determinable meaning that can be transferred to another system of signification. Deconstruction questions such a definition of translation and uses the practice of translation to demonstrate the instability of its own theoretical framework. Deconstruction resists such a system of categorisation that separates "source" text from "target" text or language from meaning, denies the existence of underlying forms independent of language, and questions theoretical assumptions that presume originary being in whatever shape or form (Gentzler 147).

Thus this blurring of boundaries between theory and practice is crucial in expanding the horizon of Translation Studies to incorporate more radical, interventionist approaches to translation practice. Another vital contribution of poststructuralism to the discipline of Translation Studies is its radical revision of established concepts like 'original,' 'work,' 'fixed meaning' and 'author' unfolding new trajectories like 'text,' 'multiplicity of meaning,' "Death of the Author" and 'free play' and thereby deconstructing the hitherto status of translation as 'mere imitation of the original' and

reconstructing the identity of translation as "different text" (Derrida 1976, 1978; Foucault 1969; Barthes 1967, 71). Derrida's critique of presence in "Des Tours de Babel" considerably complicates the notion of linguistic transfer that has been crucial to Translation Studies.

Similarly, the demystification of metaphor is another significant contribution of poststructuralism to the field of Translation Studies, as discussed by Kim Wallmach in her essay "Feminist Translation Strategies: Different or Derived?" (2006). Derrida deconstructed the concept of 'metaphor' that had been read as 'semblance of ideas,' while arguing for "difference." Thus Derridean propositions of 'difference' interrogated the previously unquestionable 'transcendental truth' or the absolute notion of the truth in every aspect of knowledge formation, including translation theories. The canon of translation theory(s) that was built on the base philosophy of 'absolute' fidelity to the original, or translation as the shadow of original work was radically shaken by Derridean deconstructionist approaches, and an alternative 'resistance' discourse was theorised and popularised challenging the hegemonic discourse of 'transparency' and 'fidelity' in Translation Studies. "This revisiting and rewriting of metaphor as a trope of difference have prompted translation theorists influenced by the poststructuralist paradigm to revisit metaphors relating to translation, which in turn has led to the establishment of approaches to translation which have taken up the call for resistance to established norms" (Wallmach 7). Some of the foremost proponents of the "resistancy" approach to translation are Lawrence Venuti, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Susan Basnett. Venuti's categorisation of "domesticating" and "foreignizing" translation technique itself was a departure from the earlier categorisation of "formal/dynamic" equivalence by Eugene Nida, and "Semantic/communicative" translation by Peter Newmark. Venuti's advocacy for "foreignising translation" was a subversive approach that eventually led to the cultural turn in Translation Studies. Venuti's emphasis on "ethnocentric violence" done to foreign culture in translation provoked deconstructionist postcolonial translators like Spivak to experiment with more radical forms of the English translation of foreign text emphasising the idea of "untranslatability" of the foreignness of the foreign culture.

Similarly, Philip Lewis (1985)'s concept of "abusive fidelity" was another strategy that can be labelled as "resistancy" and that "values experimentation, tampers with usages, seeks to match the polyvalencies and plurivocities or expressive stresses of the original by producing its own" (Lewis qtd. in Venuti 2003: 252). Lewis's "Abusive fidelity" thus involves resistance to the ideology of hegemonic fluency effect that dominated translation practices of the West for ages in favour of a more radical interventionist approach. Thus, to summarise, poststructuralist revision of theoretical concepts like original, text, metaphor, author, fidelity, and advocacy for 'free-play,' multiplicity, difference and text built the foundation for the conceptualisation of more radical and interventionist feminist translation theory and practice in the academic circle of Quebec, Canada. For example, Barbara Godard, one of the first feminist translators from Quebec to have launched experimental interventionist translation practices, in her feminist translation of Nicole Brossard's *The Sea Our Mother* (1983) and *Picture Theory* (1986) says, "translation, in its figurative meanings of transcoding and transformation" (45). In defence of her feminist translation strategies, Godard in her essay "Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation". argues that the feminist translation is "women writing their way into subjectivity through a poetics of identity which might be called "transformance" (46). This idea of "transformation" of the source text is a challenge to the canonical discourse of "fidelity towards the original" in translation. And in order for the "transformation" to be possible, she advocates for the feminist translator to "perform" in other words, discards her "self-effacing identity" and instead 'woman-handle' the text by being the "active participant in the creation of meaning" and make herself visible inside the text by immodestly flaunting "her signature in italics, in footnotes - even in a preface" (50). While discussing her translation project of Brossard's *Picture Theory* Godard further maintains, "No final version of the text is ever realisable. There are only approximations to be actualised within the conditions of different enunciative exchanges. As such, translation is concerned not with "target languages" and the conditions of "arrival" but with the ways of ordering relations between languages and cultures. Translation is an "art of approach" (Godard qtd. in Simon 1995: 24).

According to Sherry Simon, "Godard presents a suitable mode for theorising feminist translation through translations, prefaces, research papers, and the translator's diaries so that the translator is able to reveal the author's gender identity – female or queer (22). The diary-keeping translation project of Brossard's *Picture Theory* accentuates "the ongoing movement of writing and translation as "arts of approach" (24). According to Flotow, Godard's "view of the feminist translators parallels that of the poststructuralist feminist writer: it is positivist, interventionist, political" (2006: 16).

Postcolonialism and Translation Studies

While poststructuralism emphasises the power of language to construct reality, postcolonialism focuses on the unequal power relations between the colonial and colonised nation-state in terms of cultural exchange and linguistic hegemony. In this postcolonial framework, culture vis-a-vis language is identified as one of the specificities to maintain this power relation wherein English and the Eurocentric world views with their construction of the binaries of 'occident' and 'orient' in their default template of 'self' and 'Other,' as Chinua Achebe has remarked, are interrogated continuously and problematised as hegemonic forces responsible for the marginalisation of its colonised cultural Other. This notion of 'self' and 'Other' is of particular interest to feminists as they question the unquestionable gender norms of the patriarchal society according to which man is always projected as the 'self', and woman as his subordinated 'Other.' Translation as a representative art has deeply been infected with this binary since time immemorial. Translation, unfortunately, in the traditionalist conceptualisation, was always seen as the 'Other,' or the shadow of the 'Original' work of the author. Similarly, postcolonialism, in its extended theories, not only problematises the existing clean binary that has been constructed between the colonial subject and the colonised Other, but it also highlights the problematics within the decolonised nation-state. Postcolonial theorists like Homi K. Bhabha challenge the existence of such clean binary as 'Empire/Nation' by pointing to a third space, the space of "liminality". the "in-between" space, which is essential for Translation Studies. As Bhabha says, "we should remember that it is the 'inter' – the cutting edge of translation and renegotiation, the

in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national anti-nationalist histories of the 'people.' And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves" (Bhabha qtd. in Bassnett and Trivedi 1999: 6). Similarly, Bhabha's advocacy for "supplement". in his essay "DissemiNation". that "cumulates and accumulates presence,' that "coming after the original" that "compensate for minus in origin" (154) is crucial in the understanding of feminist translation theory and practice. For example, Luise von Flotow, a feminist translation theorist, in her seminal essay "Feminist Translation: Context, Theory and Practice". discusses various strategies used in feminist translation, i.e., supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and hijacking (74-79), in order to "make explicit, what is implicit in the feminist text." According Flotow, "'Supplementing' is one of the most positive aspects of translation" that "compensates for the differences between languages". or constitutes "voluntarist action" on the text" and through which the source text is "matured, developed and given an afterlife" (74-75). 'Supplementing' offers "poetics of visibility" and "aesthetic of female subjectivity" for female translators seeking new direction and perspective to engage with feminist writing.

Postcolonialism further questions the homogenous totalitarian identity of the postcolonial subject as envisaged in the colonial discourses. It emphasises the plurality of identity of the subject, which is directly connected with the subject's location and positionality in history(s) and discourses. This slogan of the 'plurality of identity' coincides with the third wave of feminisms' rejection of any essentialist construction/representation of women of the "Third world" as only 'victims' of patriarchy. "Intersectionality" or the existence of various other identity markers like race, caste, class, nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexuality was brought into the feminist discourse culminating in replacing 'Feminism' with 'feminisms,' the micro, and the plural. Central to such theories are bell Hooks, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Sherry Simon and Luise von Flotow. Spivak's theories are of particular interest to the context of the study as she speaks from the interconnected space of gender, feminism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and translation. In the tradition of

transnational feminism, Spivak criticises Western Feminists "translatese" of non-western women's work, without understanding and acquiring first-hand knowledge of their language, culture, and positionality. For Spivak, the 'erotic,' 'the intimacy,' the complete 'surrender' to the text is more important in translation than the traditional ethics of translating a text. According to Spivak, in translation, "first, the translator must surrender to the text. She must solicit the text to show the limits of its language, because that rhetorical aspect will point at the silence of the absolute fraying of language that the text wards off, in its special manner" (Spivak qtd. in Simon 2005: 136). Regarding the politics of translation, she says, "the task of the translator is to facilitate this love between the original and its shadow, a love that permits fraying, holds the agency of the translator and the demands of her imagined or actual audience at bay" (181). Spivak is an interventionist deconstructive postcolonial feminist translator, both in theory and practice, and this positionality of Spivak can be easily located in her translation of Mahasweta Devi's *Imaginary Maps* (1995). *Imaginary Maps* is a metatext: a compound of the English translation of Bengali stories, a lengthy preface by Spivak, and interview of Mahasweta Devi herself; the result being that both Spivak and Devi are the co-producer of the translated text. Spivak' s diatribe on the first world feminists' approach in "apprehending" their third world counterpart, in her translator's note, her deliberate use of foreignising technique, i.e., abrupt syntax, retention of tribal dialects, her discourse on empire, culture and identity, her tirade on the decolonised nation-state and the condition of the subaltern can be found in her translation of Mahasweta Devi's short story "Draupadi". the story of the state-sponsored sexual violence (gang rape) of the tribal Naxalite woman Dopdi, and her insubordination.

Similarly, von Flotow in her essay "Disunity and Diversity: Feminist Approaches to Translation Studies". highlights the prevailing disunity in feminist work and scholarship concerning translation, and traces it to the "identity politics" and "positionality" and "historicity" of the translators that is based on the contextual and cultural difference (3). She discusses the various criticism 'feminist translation' has been subjected to since its conceptions, i.e., "mainstream translatese of the third world material (as Spivak

accuses)". "Elitist translation" (as Robyn Gillam criticises) and as "Hypocritical translation" (as Rosemary Arrojo argues) (4-6). Flotow concludes, referring to Linda Alcoff, that this disunity/ difference is strategic, based on factors like: "identity politics (the writer/ critic's identity has an effect on their perceptions and writing), positionality (the effect of this writing is relativised by institutional, economic and other factors), and historical dimension (perceptions/interest/topics change with the time as does identity)" (4). In another essay "On the Challenges of Transnational Feminist Translation Studies". she discusses the hegemony of English and its impact on the circulation and acceptance of feminist discourses. She points out the consequences of the dominance of the English language and Anglo-American/European Feminists in Global translation field as follows:

> The marginalisation of large segments of feminist thought worldwide; the isolation of those researchers who work on/in national or linguistic peripheries; the requirement for researchers from other languages and cultures to rely on and work in "structures outside their social framework" in order to read and publish; gatekeeping functions of English-publishing, which not only privilege materials written by English-language researchers, but control the form and content (themes and topics) to be published; the tendency for unilingual anglophone scholars to feel their unilingualism relieves them of any "obligation to know about others' work" which causes them not to see the need (or be unable to) open up to "other perspectives and cultural realities". which is a major impediment to transnational work (Descarries qtd. in Flotow 2017: 177).

Taking clues from Tymozcko's call for "international" translation studies, she advocates for "transnational" feminist translation studies that evokes "concerned usefulness, helpfulness, shared and collaborative communication across and despite borders and languages to promote mutual interests" (von Flotow 2017: 175).

Thus the postcolonial turn in translation studies not only rejects a narrow understanding of translation as the 'Other' of the original, but also interrogates the complete "domestication" of the 'cultural Other' (the foreign language text) by the dominant English language

in "exotropic" translation from India; cultural meaning cannot be located in dictionaries but, "in the process of negotiation" and "in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities" (Simon 2005: 131). Feminist translation is one such testing ground for cultural meaning, "in emphasising the crucial historical and ideological role of gender in language, by underscoring the role of subjectivity in framing and reclaiming meaning, feminist translators foreground the cultural identity of women" (Simon 2005: 134).

Feminism and Translation Studies

Similarly, the confluence of Gender Studies, Feminism, and Translation Studies opened up new possibilities for understanding gender in/and translation in its metatextual, paratextual and textual reading of translated text on the one hand. It provided innovative strategies for interventionist translation practices to make translation gender-conscious on the other. Though it would not be wrong to say that feminism as a whole has contributed to the development of Feminist Translation Studies, it is Elaine Showalter's framework of "gynocriticism". and the French feminists' engagement with the nature of language (their critique of phallogocentric language, and their emphasis on the need for a different language to represent the realities of women's lives) that have been influential in shaping the agendas of feminist translators. Showalter's "gynocriticism". the second phase in feminist criticism, is seminal because it proposes a female-centric framework to trace female writers' presence in literary historiography in the West. A gynocritic orients her excavation towards woman as writer, reader, and character, different from a feminist critic whose primary concern is to provide a critique of male-defined female realities in literature:

> Feminist criticism has gradually shifted its centre from revisionary readings to a sustained investigation of literature by women. The second mode of feminist criticism engendered by this process is the study of women as writers, and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution

> and laws of a female literary tradition. No English term exists for such a specialised critical discourse, and so I have invented the term 'gynocritics.' Unlike the feminist critics, gynocritics offer many theoretical opportunities (Showalter 1981: 248).

Showalter draws attention to the gynocritical tradition established by critics like Patricia Spacks's *The Female Imagination*; Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*; Mary Ellmann's *Thinking about Women*; Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*; Ellen Moers's *Literary Women*; Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own;* Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction*; Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic;* and Margaret Homans's *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (1981: 248). For example, Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex,* which is often referred to as the 'Feminist Bible,' said, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (1949: 301). This statement falsified the acclaimed and unquestionable transcendental truth about the female body that was designed and shaped in men's literature and suggested that the woman is a cultural construct and not a biological being, "no biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine" (1949: 301). Her French feminist successor Helene Cixous in her essay "Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) suggests that a "woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. A woman must put herself into the text-as into the world and into history-by her own movement" (875). Cixous proposes 'écriture féminine' in which a woman should break away from the phallogocentric man-made language and write herself. "By writing herself, the woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from" (880) and "which will not only "realise" the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being, giving her access to her native strength; it will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal" (880) and this political act would be her "shattering entry into history, which has always been based on her suppression" (880). Cixous made this

battle cry that "women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetoric, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-the strength of women that, sweeping away syntax, breaking that famous thread (just a tiny little thread, they say) which acts for men as a surrogate umbilical cord" (886).

Thus Cixous's endeavour to find a new language for women to redefine themselves is crucial for feminist translation and its agenda to make the body visible inside the translated text. Similarly, Dale Spender argues that "language is manmade;" it is phallogocentric and heteronormative and, therefore, cannot give a faithful representation of a woman's life. Moreover, it is through the conscious manipulation of this language, by 'constructing realities' through language, that a man asserts his superiority over woman, "language is our means of classifying and ordering the world: our means of manipulating reality. In its structure and its use, we bring our world into realisation, and if it is inherently inaccurate, then we are misled. If the rules which underlie our language system, our symbolic order, are invalid, then we are daily deceived" (Spender 1980: 2-3). Luce Irigaray, another of the trio of 'French feminists,' uses the framework of Lacanian psychoanalysis to demonstrate her critique of phallogocentric language. She suggests, like Lacan, that the ego is formed through the presence of the phallus in the male body and the woman's subjectivity is formulated through the lack of it; the presence and absence of the 'overdetermined' phallus is responsible for the projection of male superiority and female inferiority. Irigaray, therefore, beckons for a woman to scrutinise her body through the "speculum" and reconstruct her subjectivity through her sexuality. According to Irigaray, a woman's sexuality is deliberately mystified or reduced to only intercourse, "she is reduced to a function and a functioning whose historic causes must be reconsidered: property system, philosophical, mythological, or religious system – the theory and practice of psychoanalysis itself – all continually, even today, prescribe and define that destiny laid down for woman's sexuality" (1985: 129). She believes that it is only through the application of "speculum" that "enables femininity through female genitals, like two lips, the metonymy of the

doubleness of text and body, showing feminine multiplicity" (Wu 2013: 24) a feminine text, a "self-sufficient (w)hole". "a vision without cohesion" (Johnston qtd. in Wu 2013: 24) can be produced.

The theory of "écriture féminine" moves to another level in Julia Kristeva's, the last of the trio of French feminists, enunciation of the semiotic and symbolic language in her two essays "The Speaking Subject" (1985) and "The System and the Speaking Subject" (1986). According to Kristeva, 'symbolic' refers to "system of meaning (as structuralism and generative grammar study it) – a language with a foreclosed subject or with a transcendental subject-ego" (Kristeva 1985: 217; Wu 2013: 24) and 'semiotics,' functions through "genotext" and "phenotext" (Kristeva 1986: 28; Wu 2013: 24). The symbolic, in the Kristevian framework of understanding language, is associated with pattern, control, dichotomy, repression, and rigidity and therefore phallogocentric; the semiotic, on the other hand, is female centric in nature, and operates in the realm of "displacement, condensation, metonymy, metaphor and continuity" (Kristeva qtd. in Wu 2013: 29).

This Anglo feminist theory of 'literary female continuum' and 'gynocriticism' and French feminist theory of "écriture féminine" found a symbolic echo in feminist translation theories of Sherry Simon, Luise von Flotow and Barbara Godard, Susan Bassnett, Carol Maier and Suzanne Jill Levine. For example, Sherry Simon in her work *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (2005), while tracing the genesis of Feminist translation, unravels that it was the Renaissance "translatress" who with their subversive act "challenges the confinement of women to the purely private sphere, and gains them admission into the world of letters" (46) and therefore they are the precursors of what is, later on, came to be known as 'feminist translation.' Thus reoccupying spaces which were traditionally gender-marked, for Simon, is vital to the question of identity formation as in the case of Renaissance translatress. Similarly, von Flotow in her essay "Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism' while exposing the "man-handling" of texts like Simone de Beauvoir's *Le deuxiéme sexe*, *The Bible*, and the works of Sappho and Louise Labé, by their male translators, sought out to make the translations of women's

writing 'visibly' feminist through practices like "translating women's body, recovering women's lost works, asserting the translator's identity, revising the rhetoric of translation, reading and rewriting existing translations" (von Flotow 1997: 49-60). Flotow invokes the French feminists' theory of "écriture féminine" or "writing the body" to develop her theory of "translating the body." Susan Bassnett, another postcolonial feminist, argues for an "orgasmic theory of translation, the result of elements [that] are fused into a new whole in an encounter that is mutual, pleasurable and respectful" (Bassnett qtd. in Simon 2005: 13). Carol Maier and Suzanne Jill Levine, both advocate for a "subversive translation practice whose main aim is to expose and rewrite oppressively male misogynistic texts" (Santaemilia 2011: 62). While Maier prefers to consider her translation as "woman-identified" or "woman-interrogated". Levine argues about her 'subversive' stance that her authors "see their originals already as translations of texts and traditions as well as of realities; each in his own way is a parodist, a creator-commentator. Dethroning language's dominion over meaning, touching upon the gaps between language and meaning, they have also, in a sense, de-throned the author. As collaborators or self-translators, they are self-subverters" (8). For Levine, "translation from within feminist discourse is production, not reproduction, and nothing is sacred within that symbiotic if not parasitic relationship between translation and original composition" (7). Similarly, Jose Santaemilia believes that one of the significant achievement of feminist translation theory is the articulation of "genealogy of women translators" revealing three key facts:

I. that, throughout history, women translators have shown what we can tentatively call a strong 'female'/'feminine' solidarity;
II. that a far more number of these women translators can be considered unambiguously, as 'proto-feminist' translators;
III. that translation has been in the hand of women, a tool for creative writing, a subversive substitute for channelling women's creativity and women's desire for self-expression (2011: 66).

Conclusion

Thus the critical landscape provided by both Anglo-American and French feminist literary theories and theories of language helped the bourgeoning of feminist translation theory and practice. The search for a) alternative reading practices for women's work; b) radical writing strategies using the language of women's body and sexuality; c) to create a rupture in the normative understanding of gender in literature and language; and d) to rediscover the lost women writers and make their work public, necessitated a new and radical approach to translation theory and practice, thus germinating the seed of English feminist translation of Quebec experimental feminist texts.

Feminist translation, an offshoot of feminist writing, was conceptualised, theorised, practised and popularised by a group of feminist translators and academics in Quebec, the French dominated area in Canada and in English in the 1970s and 80s as a response to the problems mentioned above. These Québecois feminist writers and English translators, empowered by Derridean notions of "deconstruction" and "difference". postcolonial formulation of "supplementing" and French feminists' philosophy of "écriture féminine". launched specific interventionist writing and translation practices with their agenda to problematise the hitherto neglected area of gender in/and translation. These translators, i.e., Sherry Simon, Luise von Flotow, Barbara Godard, Kathy Mezei, Susanne De Lotbinier-Harwood see themselves more as a collaborative producer of the translated text than as a mere imitator reproducing the sense of the "original" text in the target language. They aim to provide a critique of 'man-handling' of women's texts in translation thus, recovering the lost woman author in translation; to make the translation a gendered text by making the body of the woman visible; making the silenced woman speak in translation thus challenging the traditional notion of "fidelity towards the original" in translation; and to make the invisible translator visible through various interventionist translation practices such as "supplementing", "prefacing", "footnoting", "hijacking" and "wordplay", thus, democratising the literary canon to incorporate the name of the translators, through whom the majority of the world's knowledge and text have been disseminated and made accessible to an audience

as large and heterogeneous as we are today. Thus the figure of the feminist translator that emerges in their translation discourses can be summed up as, to quote Mellissa Wallace, "Translators as "Writers" of Wrongdoing" "Translators as Re-readers and Re-writers". "Translators as Transgressors". and "Translators as Political Agents" (67-70). About Canadian Feminist translation, Luise von Flotow writes, "it is a phenomenon intimately connected to a specific writing practice in a specific ideological and cultural environment, the result of a specific social conjuncture. It is an approach to translation that has appropriated and adapted many of the techniques and theories that underlie the writing it translates" (1991: 74).

References

ACHEBE, CHINUA. 2016. An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness. In Sathpathy, Sumanyu (Ed.), *Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness*. New Delhi: Worldview Publication.

ARROJO, ROSEMARY. 1998. The Revision of the Traditional Gap between Theory and Practice and the Empowerment of Translation in Postmodern Times. *The Translator*, 4 (1). 25-48. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.1998.10799005.

BARTHES, ROLAND. 1977. The Death of the Author (Richard Howard, Trans.). Accessed online: https://writing.upenn.edu/~taransky/Barthes.pdf.

BASSNETT, SUSAN AND HARISH TRIVEDI. (Eds.). 1999. *Postcolonial Translation: Theory and Practice.* London: Routledge. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203068878.

BEAUVOIR, SIMON DE. 1989. *The Second Sex* (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

BHABHA, HOMI. K. 1994. DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation. *The Location of Culture.* London & New York: Routledge. Accessed online: https://archive.org/stream/TheLocationOfCultureBHABHA/the+location+of+culture+BHABHA_djvu.txt.

CIXOUS, HELENE. 1976. The Laugh of the Medusa (Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, Trans.). *Signs*, 1 (4). 875-893. Accessed online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239.

DERRIDA, JACQUES. 1976. *Of Grammatology* (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

DERRIDA, JACQUES. 1967. *Writing and Difference* (Alan Bass, Trans.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

DEVI, MAHASWETA. 2014. *Breast Stories* (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Trans.). Kolkata: Seagull Books.

DEVI, MAHASWETA.1995. *Imaginary Maps*. (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Trans.). London & New York: Seagull Books.

FOUCAULT, MICHEL. 1984. What is an Author? In Rabinow, Paul (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader*. 101-120. New York: Pantheon Books. Accessed online: https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/624849/mod_resource/content/1/a840_1_michel_foucault.pdf.

GENTLZER, EDWIN. 2001. *Contemporary Translation Theories: Topics in Translation 21.* New York: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

GODARD, BARBARA. 1995. A Translator's Diary. In Simon, Sherry (Ed.), *Culture in Transit: Translation and the Changing Identities of Quebec Literature*. Montreal: Véhicule Press.

GODARD, BARBARA. 2011. Translating Ang(l)es: Or, the Difference "L" Makes. In Federici, Eleonara (Ed.), *Translating Gender*. 23-54. New York: Peter Lang AG.

GODARD, BARBARA. 1990. Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation. In Bassnett, S. and A. Lefevere (Eds.), *Translation: History and Culture*. Frances Pinter. Accessed online: https://tessera.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/tessera/article/download/23583/21792/0.

GODARD, BARBARA. 1991. Translating (With) the Speculum. *Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 4 (2). 85–121. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.7202/037095ar.

GODARD, BARBARA. 2002. A Literature in the Making: Rewriting and the Dynamism of the Cultural Field. Quebec Women Writers in English Canada. *Ilha do Desterro A Journal of English Language, Literatures in English and Cultural Studies* 42. 49-102. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.5007/%25x.

IRIGARAY, LUCE. 1985. *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Gillian c. Gill, Trans.). Cornel: Cornell University Press.

LEVINE, SUZANNE JILL. 1991. *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction*. Minnesota: Graywolf Press.

LEVINE, SUZANNE JILL. 1983. Translating a (Sub)Version: On Translating Infante's *Inferno*. *Sub-stance* 42. 85-93. Accessed on line: 10.2307/3684106.

MAIER, CAROL. 1992. Women in Translation: Current Intersections, Theory and Practice. *Delos*, 5 (2).

MOHANTY, CHANDRA TALPADE. 1984. Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *boundary 2,* 12 (3). 333-358. Accessed online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/302821.

SAID, EDWARD W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

SANTAEMILIA, JOSE. (Ed.). 2005. *Gender, Sex and Translation. The Manipulation of Identities*. London: Routledge.

SANTAEMILIA, JOSE. 2011. Woman and Translation: Geographies, Voices, Identities. *MonTI* 3. 29-28. Accessed online: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/16373128.pdf.

SANTAEMILIA, JOSE. 2011. Feminist Translating: On Women Theory and Practice. In Federici, Eleonara (Ed.), *Translating Gender*. 55-78. New York: Peter Lang AG.

SHOWALTER, ELAINE. 1981. Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(2). 179-205. Accessed online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343159.

SIMON, SHERRY. (Ed.). 1995. *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*. Montreal: Véhicule Press.

SIMON, SHERRY. 2005. *Gender in Translation, Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London: Routledge. Accessed online: https://www.academia.edu/25683964/Gender_in_Translation.

SPENDER, DALE. 1980. *Man Made Language*. London &Boston: Routledge& Kegan Paul.

SPIVAK, GAYATRI. 1993. The Politics of Translation. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. London & New York: Routledge. Accessed online: https://pierre-legrand.com/16spivak.pdf.

VENUTI, LAWRENCE. 2003. Translating Derrida on Translation: Relevance and Disciplinary Resistance. *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 16, (2). 237–262. Accessed online: https://pierre-legrand.com/17venuti.pdf.

VENUTI, LAWRENCE. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

VON FLOTOW, LUISE. 1991. Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices, Theories. *TTR*, 4 (2). 69-84. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.7202/037094ar.

VON FLOTOW, LUISE. 1997. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the "Era of Feminism."* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press. Accessed online: https://muse.jhu.edu/book/6616.

VON FLOTOW, LUISE. 1998. Disunity and Diversity: Feminist Approaches to Translation Studies. *Unity in Diversity*. 3-13.

Accessed online: https://www.academia.edu/2868142/Disunity_and_ Diversity Feminist Approaches_to_Translation_Studies.

VON FLOTOW, LUISE. 2006. Feminism in Translation: The Canadian Factor. *Quaderns. Revista de traducció* 13. 11-20. Accessed online: https://www.academia.edu/15560695/Feminism in Translation The Canadian_Factor.

VON FLOTOW, LUISE. 2017. On the Challenges of Transnational Feminist Translation Studies. *TTR: traduction, terminologie, redaction*, 30 (1). 173-194. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.7202/ 1060023 ar.

WALLACE, MELLISSA. 2002. Writing the Wrongs of Literature: The Figure of the Feminist and Post-Colonialist Translator. *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 35 (2). 65-74. Accessed online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1315167.

WALLMACH, KIM. 2006. Feminist Translation Strategies: Different or Derived. *JLS/TLW* 22, 1(2), 1-26. Accessed online: https://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/095/003/ecp13095003.

WU, E-CHOU. 2013. Feminist Translation / Feminist Adaptation: Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility*. *ACSIS Conference Proceedings*. 21-32. Linköping University Electronic Press. Accessed online: https://www.ep.liu.se/ecp/095/003/ecp13095003.

***

About the Author

Jharana Rani
Jharana Rani Dhangadamajhi is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Kalahandi University, Odisha.
Email: jdhmajhi[AT]kalahandiuniversity[DOT]ac[DOT]in

Cite this Work:

Dhangadamajhi, Jharana Rani. 2023. (Re)mapping the Inter-Philosophical Trajectories of Feminist Translation Theory and Praxis. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 1-20.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar1

Translating Women in Sethu's Malayalam Fiction into English: The Issue of Cultural Gaps

AMMU MARIA ASHOK &
UDAYA NARAYANA SINGH

Abstract

As time passes, there is a greater appreciation of the role of Translation Studies in understanding a woman's point of view. How to embody female discourses in translation has become a significant issue in working on a Target Language (TL) text. The present study focus on the translated text titled 'Once Upon a Time' (2014; tr. K.T. Rajagopalan), initially written in Malayalam titled 'Adayalangal' (2005) by Sethu. Through this study, we analyze a translator's literary depiction of central female characters in a woman-oriented Malayalam fiction. There is an evident loss of the essence of Kerala cultural history and its customs on the one hand, and the invisibility of the feminist voice in the text. The study explores the cultural gaps in depicting the central women characters through translation, and also, how the translator depicts women's issues, gender inequalities and handling stereotypes through translation.

Keywords: Translation, Gender, Culture, Inequality, Space, Womanhood.

Introduction

In this post-globalization world, translation has emerged as an important communication tool. It can initiate conversations between various linguistic communities around the world. It also mediates between the author of the source language and culture and her/his readers from an entirely different culture. This intercultural communication between various cultural spaces, linguistic communities, and interest groups lays the basis of inclusive, intersectional and interrelation interests in feminism and other

perspectives. The transnational experiences became very crucial with the advent of the third wave of feminism which makes the act of translation very important. Questioning each woman's identity in the text and her exploitation and suppression assumes great importance. Whether translations bring out the views and treatment of the source language author become a point of discussion. That is why it is important to recall what Olga Castro (2013) states: "The future of feminism is in the transnational, and transnational links can only be made through translation" (7). This allowed us to evaluate a Malayalam to English translation text from these angles. Our purpose is to discover the cultural gaps that emerge from certain decisions while translating.

Postcolonial studies nowadays prioritise in the representation of the marginal, and therefore it is important to give importance to the works that deals with women's issues from various cultures. When we check the literary and cultural histories, Gender and language have always had a troubled relationship. Castro (2013) refers to language, along with its translation, as "tools for gender oppression and liberation" (7). Language is a good vehicle for communicating culture but a medium for communicating prejudices as well. Giventhis scenario, feminist writings have always felt the need to 'convert' language, to find ways to overturn the patriarchal bent of the language and re-engage it to topple the existing hierarchies. Flowtow comments in his work titled *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism* (1997) that the feminists of 1970s looked at language "as an instrument of women's oppression and subjugation which needed to be reformed, if not replaced by a new women's language" (14).

The Text and the Feminist Perspective

The present study is about the issue of cultural gaps in portraying women in translation where the examples come from Malayalam to English translation of a well-known prose writer in Kerala – Sethu. In the process, we also discuss the centrality of women characters in the Malayalam novel. Sethu's treatment of his women characters shows that he attempts to delve into their psychological depth. His works are an inspiration for women who are struggling to change

their situation. In several novels, the author tries to motivate readers to understand that women cannot be viewed as subordinates as they were traditionally portrayed. Instead, he focuses on women as leaders who can take centre-stage in today's socio-political and economic matters. He pays special attention to women the patriarchy excluded from participating in important issues of their families and society. In his depiction, the female characters assume equal importance vis-à-vis the men folk for their status and roles. This approach highlights the cultural practices that men generally use to subjugate women. As the victims of gender imbalances, it is up to these women to fight back and deal with stereotyping. In the process, the author sheds light on the psyche of the modern young woman in the Malayalam speech community.

Only a limited number of papers and articles in Malayalam highlight the lack of serious engagement with the theoretical perspectives of cultural gaps in portraying women and translation. Therefore, there is a need for a deeper exploration of the same. This study attempts to analyze culture gaps and involves the multiple interpretations of women through translation by examining how language becomes a tool of gender experiences. This will open up fresh dialogic spaces to engage with interpreting gender from the translation perspective.

Women, and their socio-cultural issues come out clearly in the TL Text if the translators are sensitive to the author's motivation and attitudes. This study will expose how a male translator uses his translation strategies and methods to twist and turn female discourse which should have otherwise revealed the portrayal of women and culture in the background. The study also depicts how the translator did not accept the challenge of depicting the concept of gender and culture to the target text readers, even when the author and the Source Text provided ample opportunities.

The translation is explained as cross-cultural transfer, as Vermeer (1986) explains the theory in detail. Here the suggestion is that cross-cultural transfer implies or infers an ideological transfer as well if the author's ideology is understood in its broad sense, i.e. as the standard set of values, beliefs and ideas that govern a community. Hence a translator must possess in-depth knowledge of

the values, beliefs, and ideas that connect the two languages being mediated through translation.

Culler in *Reading as a Woman: On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (1983) suggests that learning to read as a woman may open up new vistas. It may awaken each reader to the meaning of sexual codes buried in the source text, allowing one to identify and correct distortions imposed by a male critical vision. When considering the reading of a translation from a woman's perspective, it's important to recognize those individuals' experiences and interpretations can be shaped by their gender, cultural background, and social context. One could consider a few key points in this respect when discussing reading of translations. The first thing about a woman's perspective would be the emphasis of these texts on 'representation' and 'authenticity' that have been historically underrepresented or misrepresented in literature. When reading a translation, a woman may pay particular attention to how female characters are portrayed, whether their voices are authentically represented, and whether their experiences resonate with their own realities. Therefore, when a woman translates such texts, the emphasis would usually be on gendered choice of language and managing power dynamics. A woman's reading of translation analyzes how gendered language is used, and how cultural norms embedded in the text. The power relationships between male and female characters are highlighted in such portrayals. Translations offer insights into the roles and expectations placed on women in those societies. One could thus see how gender roles and stereotypes are depicted, whether women are portrayed as passive or active agents, and how they navigate societal expectations. In our case, however, it is a woman-centric text, translated by a male translator – and hence many of these perspectives may be missing. In particular, the intersectionality aspects that are reflected social identities and categories, and the empathy and connection with characters would be missing because of a male translator's understanding of gender dynamics.

When a female-centric story is muted through male translation, there is a danger that such translation could become a gross misrepresentation. Naturally, the understanding available to each

target language reader becomes limited in some ways, thus distorting the source texts. Schweickart states in *Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading* (1989) that gender plays a role in our experience an interpretation, especially for a woman reading texts written by men, as well as other women. Today's readers must compensate for how "the experiences and perspectives of women have been systematically and fallaciously assimilated into literature" (24). Judith Fetterley (1978) uses the term "resisting readers". to apply in a new context — for those readers' resistant to subversive meanings and characterizations in texts that may threaten the patriarchy and its view of the world.

Translation in this epoch, which is powerfully influenced by feminist thoughts, can have a drastic effect on literary translation of fictions. A prominent name that comes to mind is that of Judith Butler who is known for her work on gender performativity, especially the ways in which gender is constructed and enacted through language and discourse. Her book '*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*' (1990) has been highly influential in feminist theory and has implications for reading and interpreting literature. Similarly, a prominent feminist theorist, Bell Hooks has written extensively on the intersection of race, gender, and class in her book '*Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center'* (1984). In her work, she explores the politics of representation and challenges traditional modes of reading and interpretation. The French feminist theoretician, Hélène Cixous focuses on literary theory through her exploration of feminine writing. How the subversion of traditional patriarchal structures can be seen in the fictions, or how the alternative modes of expression can be seen are exemplified in her 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (1975). Of course, the post-colonial studies scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also examined issues of gender, race, and power within the context of literature and translation – especially in her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988).

Due to the experimental nature of the women-oriented stories, each translator has had to deal with enormous translation challenges. Thus, each translator must resort to contemporary women's issues in society to successfully translate a text into their culture. Critic and

translator Marian Ury has noted in her book titled *The Imaginary Kingdom and the Translator's Art: Notes on Re-reading Waley's Genji* (1977) that "A translator is first of all a reader, and every reader … seeks out in the text those values most congenial to him" (183). In most Indian literary translations, female life and meaning depicted in the source language texts may be inaccessible to male interpretation unless and until men share similar experiences and frames of reference. In the texts under discussion in the Indian context, only filtered account of woman's point of view is presented. The women protagonists are portrayed by misrepresenting their points of view, or their views are commonly dismissed because of a male interpretation. Thus, a perfectly transparent translation becomes difficult as the translators give greater or lesser emphasis, subconsciously or otherwise, to different kinds of values, character traits, and impressions while translating fiction.

The search for identity for each female character was the main focus of the source text in Malayalam, titled *Adayalangal* (2005), translated as *Once Upon a Time* (2014) by K. T. Rajagopalan. The fiction shows the emergence of the female protagonists and their rise – from being victims of the struggle for identity to becoming leaders to create gender awareness and identity formation. Translating such women-oriented source texts to any target language would show a cultural turn. Managing bilingualism in the Target Text will also portray women's quest for identity. The text displays the female spirit of independence expressed through an interesting use of the source language. The challenge is to match that style in a linguistically and culturally language so far removed from Malayalam.

When asked about the omissions and commissions in his English version, the translator comments (in a personal communication) that he has opted for a free translation rather than retaining the fidelity to the original. The translator being a close acquaintance or friend of the author made the latter agree on the departure from the original text version, and many deletions were mutually agreed upon. The translator acknowledges the lack of knowledge in linguistics which he said could have facilitated the translation process. Such exposures would have helped create the much-needed context to accommodate the given scenarios or cultural practices into the TLT. He thought

that could give translated words bequeathed with meaning and equivalences. He also commented that as he was not formally educated in any Indian languages, it affected the flexibility and choice of equivalences while translating. He further explains that there may often be no equivalents in other languages for words specific to geography, culture, climate, people or practices, as reflected in Malayalam. Likewise, words and phrases relating to faiths, beliefs, religion or rituals are not amenable to translation. If one were to attempt to translate them, not only would one have to belabour the matter, but it would affect the readability too. One could mention here J. Lévy's work that examines the translator's role in making choices from among the various alternatives available during the translation process. For Lévy, translation involves a series of decisions to arrive at the most appropriate option – and this decision can pertain to various linguistic, cultural, stylistic, and communicative aspects of the text. Lévy's perspective emphasizes the active agency of the translator in navigating the complexities of translation. But for the translator here, it is evident from the explanations obtained that the nature of the decision-making process here must have been more subjective, based on his own interpretive choices when making decisions. Although this act of translation could have been creative and dynamic with a systematic pathway to arrive at the chosen expressions, this has not been the case while transferring the source text in the target language.

The Translational Problem

Let us elaborate on the theme of the SLT here. Priyamvada, an HR professional and a single parent, is the novel's central character under discussion - *Once Upon a Time* (2014). She is a powerful woman who can stand independently to solve her problems. She is a courageous mother who protects and looks after her daughter without her husband's or in-laws' support. Priyamvada does not appear as a weak character who must bow down to the pressures of society and meekly carry out the role assigned to her. She is unlike other typical Indian women whom someone else must supervise to carry out their tasks as daughters, sisters and mothers. However, the expected social behaviour of women in Kerala is in contrast as they

have to remain subservient to the head of the family. At the time of the story, the social norm is that women should behave as passive individuals and have only secondary roles in the family's decision-making processes.

For readers of Sethu's original Malayalam novel *Adayalangal* (2005), Priyamvada's bold nature is a welcome deviation from the 'normal' stereotypical woman in traditional Indian society. Foley (1995) tells us that such stereotypical literary texts often portray a negative picture of female independence. The emotional outburst of these women in their situation could become hysterical. As expected, such reactions do occur in the text when the woman in the lead is under unreasonable patriarchal control. The societal rules affect her mental peace and result in a reaction that could be unpleasant. Priyamvada is driven mad by the unpleasant circumstances of the patriarchal society's forced marriage and the rules of the traditional society. An example from the target text that lost its impact in English could be presented below:

SL: amme mahamaayee! ente strethvam kaathusuukshikaan anugrahikeenamee
Mother/Mahamayya!/my/femininity/preserve/bless
enikku entethaayoru idam saadhyamaakkename (247).
I /have my own/space/ be possible

TL: "All along, she had only one prayer: help me preserve my femininеness. Give me a place of my own" (225).

Here, a more appropriate translational choice for the expression "femininеness" could be "womanhood." "Femininity" always talks about female beauty, and since this word is also closely tied with youth and fertility, whereas "womanhood" ("streethvam" in Malayalam) is the appropriate word which would give the correct contextual meaning. The protagonist wants to preserve her identity and womanhood. She is not a woman who wants to control or invade men's territory. Instead, she wants her own space, identity, freedom and respect from her counterpart and from the society at large. She is quiet throughout the text, but the moment she finds that her identity is threatened, she bursts into anger and expresses disappointment as she tries to overcome her emotions. The translator portrays her arrogant behaviour, which is unavoidable when she loses her cool.

But the aberrant behaviour of the central woman character shows that her environment has had a tremendous influence on loss of temper. The dialogue and the words used by the character portray much of her personality. However, the translator portrays her as an arrogant, selfish and irrational person without going into the psychological trauma of the protagonist.

Consider the following example:

SL: "ningalude aa prakrithamaaya karuthinumunpil
churundukuudaarundaayirunna aa
Your/that/pristine/before strength/used to curl up/that/
pazhaya naattinpurathukaariye maraneekku. ente shariirathe,
manasine orikkalum
old/countrywoman/forget/my body/mind/never/
arinjukondu thodaan ningalkku aayittilla" (247).
knowingly/touch/for you/has not been possible/

TL: "I am no more the village belle you used to know, the one who used to cower under your brute force. You have never succeeded in touching my body or my mind" (225).

In this case, the translator did not do justice by presenting the behavioural complexities of women in the TL text. He presents us with a woman who fights against her cultural set-up. In his rendering, we find her to be a person who displays unreasonable behaviour, as if she is someone who wants to get rid of man's territory. The translator could not assess and assert the power of Sethu's expression in the TL. Sethu's choices act as a tool in establishing the position of women in the traditional hierarchy. For her, the expression "country woman" would have been an appropriate translation for ''naattinpurathukaari" in Malayalam instead of the choice of "village belle." By the word "naattinpurathukaari", the author pointed towardsa woman who lives in or who comes from the countryside and not the town. Also, the author explains her to be a typical Indian woman who comes from a rural background, and who does not have a modern mindset of an urban woman when he explains her past, especially to mark her transition into a complex character with a strident voice.

It is evident that translation is at times challenging, especially because English often seems too prosaic and lacks originality to handle certain passages and sentences about characters' internal conflicts. It was also very difficult to translate certain words and phrases which may appear simple on the surface as they are so culture-specific. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, to communicate the feelings they evoke in Malayalam into English, resulting in cultural gaps.

Gender is always a constructed notion as it is "a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real" (Butler 1990). When the issue of woman is focused here, the author positively projects women-centred issues giving careful thought and treatment. However, the translation of this story does not seem to be impressed by the central concern of feminism in the SLT. To some extent, the rejection of traditional hierarchies, gendered and power-driven roles, questions of faithfulness, and the questioning of universal standards of meaning and values are all missing in his translation. Practically speaking, a translator's ultimate goal would be to convey the true sense of the meaning in the target language. The central act of translation in communicating a text in the target language is to make it understandable for foreign readers. Simon argues in "Gender and Translation" to present the following viewpoints: "My translation practice is a political activity aimed at making language speaks for women. So, my signature on a translation means to use every translation strategy to make the feminine visible in language" (Simon 1996: 15).

In Indian literary history, the postcolonial discourse depicts women occupying an inferior position. The reason is explained by Tavassoli & Mirzapour (2014) who argued that women in the colonized countries suffered from a double colonization: native patriarchies and imperialist ideology. From either angle, they are considered weak and less educated, so they get insufficient opportunities. Ultimately, they understand that they must assume power as an awakening female force. These issues should gain priority in translation and be a reason for the texts to be translated in a certain way. The translator should ideally emphasize the main subject content, including culture-connected words and stress points.

Target text should also capture these qualities through a sincere translation effort and accept a moral responsibility to project them to the target readers. Bassnett-McGuire suggests that "The translator cannot be the author of the source language text, but as the author of the target language text, has a clear moral responsibility to the target language readers" (Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 23). Thus, a gender-sensitive translator must always pay greater attention to the views offered in source language text while translating.

This particular novel was selected for its literary merit for translation and for focusing on gender-specific concerns. The woman and her issues reflected in the novel provide scope for exploring the cultural gaps in translation that it can offer. To do the translation successfully, the translator could use the basic feminist translation strategies here, such as supplementing, footing, prefacing, and hijacking, which are direct interference of translators into the target text (Von Flotow 1991: 74-84).

Priyamvada questions the basic tenets of gender politics, which always makes women victims of its nuances. This is rendered in source text when the central character ends her marriage with her husband, which is the most disgraceful for any Indian family when a woman violates her cultural tradition of arranged marriage by moving away. It is perceived as a sign of violating the values and norms of traditional Indian society. The suffering of such women projected through this translation should create a sense of gendered urgency when there is no note on the background situation– which makes it difficult to understand the actual political situation of that Kerala women face. The readers take time to understand and grasp it through the novel.

Instances of Cultural Gaps

In this section, we will cull out and present examples of cultural gaps and omissions in the translated text under consideration.

Multilingual communities like India add to this complexity in translation because the notion of language and portrayal of gender (especially women) gets interspaced with linguistic hegemonies and politics of linguistic hierarchies. The portrayal of women through translation is cut across by other parameters of identity politics, such

as caste, class, and society, each of which has an impact on the language. The cultural transference of this novel and the situations depicted in it through a few short sections in the story denote the gender and religious issues in traditional Indian society. Patriarchal society, with casteism and strict religious practices, is also practised in Kerala and also in many other states in India. All these are not reflected in the translation to scribe the desired effect. The resultant text is not readable and smooth because there is a discontinuity and omission in translation. An excellent example from the text is information on two college students from different cultural backgrounds and their marriage.

SL: "aanum pennum cheernulla otthupaarpinnepatti aadyam
keettathu ii collejil cheerna
Male/female/with/living together/first/heard/it was/during/
college/joined time/
kaalathaayirunnu. Senior classile randu kuttikal orumichu
veededuthu thaamasam thudangiyathu
senior/class/two/students/together/took house/lived/started/
valiya ochapaadundaakki…. oduvil onnum sambhavichilla
avar avasaana varshakkaar aayirunnu.
made a big/noise(issue)/finally/nothing/happened/they/last/
year was/a/
oru kuusalumillaate padippum kazhinju avaravarude
vazhikku poyi iiyide randuperudeyum vivaaham
without coaxing/study/done/they/went their/way/recently/of
both of them/marriage/
kazhinjuvennu kettu. haryanakkaaran jat kettiyathu
haryankkaari jaatine, U.P. kkaari kayestha
heard that/is over/Haryani/jaat/tied knot/Haryani/jaat/U.P.
kayestha/
kettiyatu U.P. kkaaran kayesthane. goothraacharangal
alpampoolum thettikaate viittukaar thane
tied knot/U.P.Kayestha/tribal customs/even a little/without
mistake/the family itself/
nadathikodutha vivaahangal (83).
conducted/weddings/

TL: "It was early days in college that she first heard of living in. when two seniors from the north rented a house and started living together, the campus went agog. Stories about them

> were all over the campus, but the pair who walked, heads aloft, facing barbed words and curious looks, had their fans too. But then it all came to nought. After college, they parted ways. Both got married- to those chosen by the respective families. Arranged marriages conducted strictly according to traditional rites" (75).

The translator did not mention the boy and girl's state and culture in this translation. The source text mentions that the girl is from a traditional Uttar Pradesh Kayastha family and the boy belongs to the Haryana's Jat community. The translator omitted the detailed description of these students and how their respective communities were interrupted in their issues. Here these types of dialogues in a text reveal that people are burdened by customs and norms in combination with mistaken and egoistic interpretations of different religions (Schipper in Jones 1987: 46). We believe that it is the responsibility of the translator to carry forward the tone of representation through the right cultural terms and religious descriptions with adequate information, bringing out the meaning in a firm way to present the TLT to the readers. The readers are accessing the text only through English. These readers may have different perceptions of cultural and religious practices in different parts of India as reflected in the Malayalam text.

The novel also dwells on the particular stages of Indian women's marriage lives. The author deals with his source text on what an arranged marriage means for a woman and how their futures fit into their lives, which controls their liberation and not encouraging the equality of sexes. This argument is evident on the selected part of the novel that deals with the central character's protests against the Indian marriage system, but the translator could not render the strict marital practices and its effects on women in Kerala. Consider the following:

> SL: "oru typical Indian bandham ennuparanjaal parole kittaatha aajiivanaantha thadavaanenaanu
> A/typical/to say Indian connection/parole/non-obtainable/life imprisonment/
> njaan ithevare dharichirunathu. sangathi ithreyum elupamaanennu arinjirunnengil aayakaalathu

I/so far/thought about/thing/if only/I knew/it was/so/easy/at that time/
njan oru naalanjukalyaanangal kazhikumaayirunnu (56).
I used to/have/four or five/weddings/

TL: 'Typical Indian matrimony is like a terrible life term. I was under the impression that there is no provision for parole. If I knew things were easy as this, I would have married a few times in my prime, the professor suppressed a laugh" (50).

The professor here mocks the Indian marriage system, which is terrible without an escape. The original author defies the concept of arranged marriage system, which forces women to marry someone with whom they are not acquainted. Indian society, unlike any other, has proclaimed that women must get married and carry on a family's legacy because it is all part of their culture and upbringing. Generations of women have followed this same principle of getting married early and living according to society's norms that offer no place for their preferences. And if any woman dares to disregard these social rules, all look her down, and her confidence is smashed to force her to live with fear. He considers this to be an old-school thought that should be stopped. At the same time, we also find the central character Priyamvada revealing the astrological practices of India. Consider the following:

SL: "uthamathil cherunna jaathakangal anennuparanju
jyothsyanmaar. pathil ettu porutham,
In the best/that the horoscopes match/said/astrologers/in ten/eight/horoscope match
pakshe orikkalum othucheranpaadillaathavar aayirunnuvennu manassilaakaan njangalkku
never/to meet/that they were not supposed to be/understand/ for us/three/days/
moonaalunaalukalee vendivannullu (57).
just needed/

TL: "The astrologers had pronounced it a perfect match, but it took us only four days to discover that we were not made for each other." (50) here, the translator neglected to detail the Indian astrological system, depicting how the calculation of matches was done in astrology (SL: "pathilettuporutham" 57).

This novel also indicates the cultural clash between tradition and modernity in India. It is viewed as a stereotypical case where an educated woman is seen as influenced by the West to a certain extent so that she succeeds in building her career and raises her voice for "freedom" from such practices. A reader unaware of these stereotypes might consider this translation partly discriminatory because it misses many important points about women's discourses that should have been depicted. However, it is impossible to conclude from here that the translator has deliberately or indirectly neglected the dialogue focusing on stereotyping and viewing female characters as victims resisting the accepted dominant values of their culture. But the net effect of his decisions resulted in not finding a comprehensive "translation" of the novel. The portrayal of woman through translation brings together multiple epistemological concerns, especially about culture and society. It looks at the nature of language and its relationship vis-s-vis not just women but all marginalized communities. It also looks at the possibilities of their empowerment inherent in translation. Good examples of such omitted portions include Priyamvada's grandmother's inspirational dialogue on women's empowerment.

SL: "thalauyarthi nadakanna penninte munpil oranum
pathinivarthilla" (119).
Head/raised/walking/of/female/in front of/no one/rears up
head/

(Meaning: No one will stand in front (against) of a woman who walks with her head held high.)

Priyamvada is considered a good woman, but she is perceived as giving into the authority and control of her father, as she has been under such male surveillance. When they do something with courage, they are labeled as impudent and a feminist. She lives in a country and in a region where it is a norm that women should show respect towards their husband and father in all family matters. The author portrays this predicament through his female characters. His view is that a balance should be maintained between the social patriarchal control of a man over a woman, incorporating liberal and modern values. He himself is against the old-fashioned idea of forcing his daughter to marry a man whom she does not love. Such

powerful dialogues were omitted by the translator, as in the following:

SL: “achante annathe aa vaachakam marakaanaavunnilla.
praayamaayakuttiye hostelil kondupooyi
Father’s/then/that/sentence/can’t forget/old/child/in/hostel /take/
tallaanpaakathinulla gathikedu… taanoru muthirna penkuttiyaayi enna thonnal onnukuudi
dump into/fate/feeling like/a grown-up/girl/thought/again/ urapikunnathu avidevachayirikaam” (90).
fixing/will be/from there

(Meaning: The depravity of putting a grown-up girl into a hostel...maybe it is at that time again that I reassert the feeling of being a grown woman again.)

The meanings conveyed through these dialogues are profound, and they relate to Kerala’s political and social situations concerning marriage, education, and freedom of expression as perceived by the author. These social issues are evident when women live in a male-dominated patriarchal society in which women remain unacknowledged. But women are neglected in crucial decision-making situations, because their society demands them to be dependent and passive. Here Priyamvada stresses on her daughter’s freedom:

SL: “innu neethuvinteyokke mukhathu kaanaanaavunna aa athmavishvaasathinte
Today/on Neetu’s/face/can be seen/that/of confidence/
paatiyengilum undaayirunenkil, purushaneppatti yaathonnum arinjukuudaathirunna aa
If only half was there/ nothing about the man/don’t know/at that/
cherupraayathil, thante kalyaanam nadakkillaayirunnu” (90).
young age/my/wedding/would not have taken place/

(Meaning: If I had even half of the confidence that you can see on Neetu’s face today, I wouldn’t have gotten married at such a young age when I didn’t know anything about men.)

Each culture's learning begins within one's family, school, workplace, society, and community. This background is the one that lies within the cultural setting in which an individual grows up and collects his or her life experiences. The culture has an invariable effect on each woman's behaviour, female status, and rightful place in contemporary Indian society. Sethu clearly depicts the psychological effects of females, traditionally linked to traits like emotionality, maturity, and dependence. But it is a pity that some important sentences depicting how it influences each woman were found untranslated in the target text.

SL: "Alice angane rasamaayittu paranjupokum irunirathil nalla pokkathil kuuttupurikavum
Alice/so/amused/will say/wheatish completion/tall/with eyebrows/
kattimiishayum okke aayi ethandorutharam urupadi. nettiyillo kavilatho matto vettinte
with a thick mustache/almost an iron figure/forehead/or cheek or otherwise/of a cut/
adayaalam kuudiyundengil jooraayi. angane engane nokiiyaalum oru shariyaaya aantuna.
mark/excellent/So/however it will be/a/right male/
enikkayaalude kaikalilkidannu valaranam. ayalude chuuodil viriyanam. ayalude thanalil
I want to lie/grow/in/his/arms/and hatch/in his/warmth/In his/ shade/
ayaal tarunna aa valiya urapil enikoru kudumbam undaakanam. Oru randaam kettaanengilum
he/gives/that big/assurance/I should have a/family/even if a/ second marriage/
kuzhappamilla. vereyoru pennintekuude poruthathinte experience kaanuullo (20).
It's okay/another/experience/girl/with/experience/of living with another/

TL: "Alice would go on, 'Tall and dark…with thick eyebrows … and heavy moustache, the works. I will grow in the macho's hands, hatch in his warmth. I will rear a family in the shade and the security he provides.' I know it's fashionable to be feminist. Brand me conservative, but I prefer man's

> masculinity to woman's femininity. Call me prude if you will, but believe that the lord had its purpose when he made man stronger. The woman has to grow in his shade and security…" (17)

Since it is a patriarchal community where the order of doing things has become too rigid for a woman and all the power is vested in one sector (male) of the society, the translator here omitted an important half of the dialogue.

> (SL: "oru randamkettaayaalum kuzhappamilla. veereyoru pennintekuude poruthathinte
> experience kanoolo" (20).
> (It's okay/another/experience/girl/with/experience/of living with another/)

Alice here says that she is even ready to marry a guy who is strong and already married. Explaining that he will already have experience in married life, which a conservative and narrow-minded woman like Alice finds good for married life in India.

Having a voice for a woman is a symbol of homogenisation and empowerment. Freedom of expression for females is expressed in the source text, and the author indirectly encourages females to emancipate from such traditional situations. The author depicts the difficulties of moving from the traditional Kerala culture to the new modern way of life for a woman, but the translator fails to impart this effect upon readers. The translator omitted this dialogue, which is an important confirmation of a woman who is not given the freedom to decide her life. The dialogue by Alice in the novel (given below) depicts how women are entangled in traditional society. Alice's dialogue is perceived as a response to the unreasonable adherence to traditional perceptions found in Kerala society and Indian culture.

> SL: "nammudeyokke jeevitham enthu jeevithado, Neetu appanapanmaaru aadum pashum onnum
> Our/life/what/life/Neetu/our forefathers/Goat/cow/
> kadikaaathe veeliketti valarthi oduvil thalemmalem oru saisaavumbo aavunnathre ponnum panoom
> do not bite/Fenced/reared/finally/head/body/when becomes a size/plenty/gold/money

koduthu, vela paranjurappichu evideyokedakkana oru marangodantemumbileekku ittukodukkum.
was given/alice/prize bargained/lying somewhere/a/worthless guy/infront of/will put in
Alicinu enthokke venam, enthokke paadillaennokke Alice parayumbozhanu kudumbathillu fight
what alice need/what not/when/alice/saya/in the family/fight/ varunathu. athum nalla muttan fight" (15).
comes/that too/horrible/fight/

(Meaning: No matter what kind of life we have, Neetu, our parents raised us by fencing without any goat or cow biting us, and finally, when we were big enough, they paid as much gold and money as they could, fixed the price, and left us to a worthless guy living somewhere. A fight in the family occurs when Alice tells what she wants and what she doesn't want. It will be also a horrible fight.)

Further Discussions

Thus, the omitted passages from the source text show discrepancies in the target text translation. The most evident discrepancy is in the mitigation of women's issues. The reconstruction of the source text translation through this textual omission and the reception of its English-translated version led to a cultural clash between translations. The English translation of this text presents an impression as if it is an abridged version with various characters and their details omitted. The translator's omitting certain important text sections has significantly reduced the overall narration in the target text. Also, the text's pace is much faster than the source text. In the translated version, the roles of minor characters are considerably reduced. A good example is the omitted section that deals with Priyamvadava's father and her cousin, Uniyettan. These sections describe Priyamvada's education, teenage life, and upbringing in a male-dominated culture. The omitted text will provide relevant background knowledge on women's issues in Kerala society. These omissions deprive the English readers of the opportunity to appreciate the in-depth reflections on women in Kerala culture depicted in the source text. Even though a substantial amount of the text was omitted, the story was viewed as complete

and concise to a foreign reader without deepening the cultural backdrop of Kerala.

The scope of translation of these and other sensitive stories centering on women and their issues is expected to bring out their issues to a wider audience. The transfer of meaning should be carefully carried out by the translator. However, a translator could certainly take liberties in selecting and deciding how a woman's character in the text is translated and focused upon. He has put effort into making it a careful and conscious selection to project the ideas that are addressed to women with immediacy. But the actual translation gives rise to articulation problems, and how the ideas are transferred from the source text language to the target language lacks the vigour of femininity that the writer articulates through his source text. The translation of this literary text to some extent changed the mindset of a reader as it should bring to the fore the relation of a literary text to the patriarchy role of women, but the translator at times neglected such favourite sentences of the author.

Notice that even the title "*Once Upon a Time*" is not the literal translation of the original name, and has no clear connection with the story. The Malayalam title "*Adayalangal*" is more appropriate if we translate it to "Signs" or "Indications". because the author is trying to explain it through the last chapter with the symbol of a penguin that all the joys and sorrows of birth, the black and white markings on the body of the penguin, represent their status as widows in previous births. It reveals here that the story of Priyamvada and her daughter Neetu, born into their clan, is condemned to penance in the lonely glaciers; thus, in selecting equivalent words and expressions, one should be very conscious and appropriate. Only then it would help in depicting the space needed by these women to focus on their problems, highlighting gender bias and cultural and religious issues through translation.

As all readers will notice, it is a dynamic text and in line with changing times. But the translator does not offer much explanation regarding the status of the characters or the changing scenario of women's roles in Indian culture. As the women in this text want to do away with patriarchal control, they yearn for freedom of speech. This puts them at loggerheads with men who maintain their old

tradition of dominance. The characters at the end find that there is no possibility of a compromise with their counterparts. The translator focused on the changing status of the individual position of the women through dialogue but did not focus so much on the effect of their psychological development and craving for freedom at the same time. Since status and roles are two paramount aspects of interpersonal relations and culture, any translator must focus on the emphatic emotional and psychological waving and the dilemma of the female character in their changing situations as background in the old tradition.

The fact that a woman is depicted protesting for equality through writing is due to the pressures of time during the male-dominated political discourse, which leaves very little space for her to voice her protest. This fact of the novel makes it interesting to be translated to affirm the gendered position of translation. When such stories are translated, they must retain the terseness of the original and through it; the bitterness of the times of one's culture has to come out. However, translation is not an innocent activity, and this gender and culture-specific approach is what a translator should focus on while translating this novel. Douglas Robinson (2003) states "There should be "an increasing emphasis on the collective control or shaping of cultural knowledge: the role played by ideology or what Antonio Gramsci (1971) called "hegemony" in constructing and maintaining cultural knowledge and policing transfers across cultural barriers." The intercultural awareness and competence in translation arises out of experiences of culture is a complex phenomenon. Thus both the translator and translation will be better when the translator is more aware of these complexities like power differentials between cultures and gender.

Conclusion

The gender-sensitive translation issues in translated texts are noticed when there is an issue with the bilingual capabilities of a translator and when their sensitivity to reform the language is absent. This is especially true in those fictional texts where the centre space is occupied by a woman protagonist. The lack of awareness of feminist theories, or gay and lesbian identity formation, shows the

possible differences between the writer and his translator. In several cases, the intricate knowledge of the linguistic structure of source and target languages could become an issue, as in the present case. The women portrayed in the source text have linguistically and socio-politically created their own culture. Their development parallels the plot, with external forces influencing each woman from society. Here the translator's role is to depict gender issues and show sensitivity to cultural and religious issues through translation. Thus, a translator can highlight the gender politics and culture as seen in the SLT while carrying forward the original author's ideas.

Sometimes the languages are so far apart that translators create a distorted work entirely. This is because expressing an idea to potential readers in their own language can be hard enough. It becomes more difficult to carry forward the connotations in another language, unless the translator is familiar with the target language. Therefore, trying to liaison between a writer and a reader who come from two entirely different cultures and speak two different languages requires a lot of creativity and skill from a translator.

Here we may recall that Flowtow (1997) described the role of the translator in translating feminist texts as "working for the cause of the woman in this work, she regularly oversteps the bounds of invisibility that traditionally define her role" (20-21). Here, Flowtow brings in the role of the translator as an activist to portray the original text without leaving any cultural gaps. Therefore, we see two important factors in translation to avoid cultural gaps, i.e. accuracy and expressivity. A good translator's role is to achieve the goal of translation to convey the meaning and style of the source text language. Thus, it is evident that a translator should be skilled in the idioms and vocabulary of both languages and have a concrete plan to translate both emotive aspects and cultural thought processes. Michela Baldo (2021) comments that "when viewed at the cultural level, diverse spoken or written texts are understood to represent distinctive worldviews that it is the task of translators and interpreters to register, reproduce, reconfigure, and contest." It is a translator's role to work to critique heteronormative views on genders and sexualities, using translation as a tool of resistance against sexism and patriarchy.

References

BASSNETT-MCGUIRE, S. 1980. *Translation Studies*. New York: Methuen & C. 23.

BUTLER, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

CASTRO, OLGA. 2013. Introduction: Gender, Language and Translation at the Crossroads of Disciplines. *Gender and Language*. 7(1). 31-58.

CIXOUS, HÉLÈNE. 1976. The Laugh of the Medusa (Cohen, P.M, Trans). *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1(4).

CULLER, JONATHON. 1983. *Reading as a Woman, On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism.* London: Routledge.

FETTERLEY, JUDITH. 1978. *The Resisting Reader.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

FLOTOW, LOUIS-VON. 1991. Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories.*TTR* 4(2).74–84.

FLOWTOW, LOUIS-VON. 1997. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'.* Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

FOLEY, R.A. 1995. *Another Unique Species*. London: Longman.

HARDING, S-A., & Cortés, O. C. (Eds.). 2021. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Culture*. London: Routledge.

HOOKS, B. 1984. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center.* Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

HOOKS, B.1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.

LEVY, J. 1967. *Translation as a Decision Process*. In Venuti, Lawrence (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

ROBINSON, DOUGLAS. 2019. *Becoming a Translator: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Translation*. London: Routledge.

ROBINSON, DOUGLAS. 2003. *Becoming a Translator: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Translation.* London: Routledge.

SCHWEICKART, PATROCINIO P. 1989. Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading, In Showalter, Elaine (Ed.), *Speaking of Gender*. New York: Routledge**.**

SETHU. 2011. *Atayalangal*. Kottayam: D. C. Books.

SETHU. 2014. *Once Upon a Time* (K. T. Rajagopalan, Trans). Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

SIMON, SHERRY.1996. *Gender and Translation*. London: Routledge.

SPIVAK, GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY. 1988. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

TAVASSOLI, SARAH & NARGES MIRZAPOUR. 2014. Postcolonial-Feminist Elements in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. *Khazar Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences,* 17(3). 68-76.

URY, MARIAN. 1977. The Complete Genji' [Review of Seidensticker's translation of *The Tale of Genji*]. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 37. 183-201.

VERMEER, HANS J. 1986. Translation as Cultural Transfer. In Snell-Hornby, Mary (Ed.), *Translation Studies. A Reorientation. To Integrate Theory and Practice.* 30-53.

***

About the Authors

Ammu Maria Ashok
Ammu Maria Ashok is a PhD candidate in Applied Linguistics, at Amity School of Liberal Arts, Amity University Haryana, Gurugram.
Email: ammuashoke[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Udaya Narayana Singh
Udaya Narayana Singh is a Chair-Professor at Amity University Haryana. Formerly, he has served as the Director of CIIL and Pro Vice Chancellor, Visva Bharati.
Email: unsingh[AT]ggn[DOT]amity[DOT]edu

Cite this Work:

Ashok, Ammu Maria & Singh, Udaya Narayana. 2023. Translating Women in Sethu's Malayalam Fiction into English: The Issue of Cultural Gaps. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 21-44.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar2

Retranslation as Re-vision and Self-Reflective Criticism: A Comparative Analysis of Two Translations of Agnisakshi from Malayalam to English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan

CHYTHAN ANN GEORGE & SRIPARNA DAS

Abstract

Agnisakshi by Lalithambika Antharjanam (1976), a significant work in the landscape of women's writing and social novel in Malayalam, was translated into English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan and published by Kerala Sahitya Akademi in 1980. In a rare instance of self-retranslation, with 35 years between them, Vasanti Sankaranarayanan rendered a fresh translation of the same novel in 2015. Retranslations, according to Lawrence Venuti, establish their differences from the previous versions and these are guided more by ideological premises than by literary or linguistic lack in the previous translations. In contrast to the uncritical, adulatory position assumed by the translator in the first translation of Agnisakshi, the second one points to a translator who acknowledges the politics of the text, critically approaches it and, in her own words, "adds new dimensions from a feminist perspective". This paper, by closely examining the conscious interventions Sankaranarayanan makes as a feminist translator, attempts to conceptualize retranslation as an act of re-vision and self-reflective criticism, wherein the translator makes herself more visible through her translational interventions. The attempt here is to understand how the politics of the text is engaged with through retranslation by an ideologically empowered translator.

Keywords: Retranslation, Agnisakshi, Malayalam Novel, Gender, Translation.

DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar3 Translation Today, Volume 17, Issue 1

Introduction

Considered a landmark novel that documented the social evils and oppression within the Nambuthiri community, *Agnisakshi* by Lalithambika Antharjanam, is also an epochal work in the history of women's writing in Malayalam. An English translation of the novel by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan was brought out by Kerala Sahitya Akademi in 1980. In a rare instance of self-retranslation, with 35 years between them, Vasanti Sankaranarayanan rendered a fresh translation of the same novel in 2015 with the title *Agnisakshi: Fire, My Witness*. The paper undertakes a comparative analysis of the two translations and an evaluative reading of the translator's rationale behind the retranslation project. By doing so, the attempt here is to understand how the translator's shift in ideological premises substantiates the retranslation as a critical act of 're-vision'; understanding how, in the translator's strategic interventions as a 'critic', the retranslation also comes to be a critical lens for the reinterpretation of the original, and in this case, the Malayalam text.

A Brief Outline of the Theoretical Background

Over the past few decades, retranslation has come to be recognized as a significant domain of study within the theoretical inquiries of the translation landscape. An important contribution in the area was the 'Retranslation Hypothesis' that was born from the articles written by Antoine Berman (1990) and Paul Bensimonn (1990) in the French journal *Palimpsestes*. Berman proposes that the translation of literary texts is an "incomplete act" in itself and only through retranslations can it achieve completion, which, for him, meant coming close to source text. Retranslation, for Berman, is an ongoing process of improvement, wherein the journey is towards reaching a "translation that is self-aware" (Deane-Cox 2014:3). In this regard, Berman points out that the initial translations are characterized by 'la defaillance' or 'shortcomings (1990: 5), which can be counteracted by "the restorative, corrective and illuminating properties of retranslation (Deane-Cox 2014:3). More importantly, the Retranslation Hypothesis also claims that the subsequent translation of the text is free from the task of introducing the original text into the language, and hence, is at the freedom to retain the style

and letters of the original text and allow the foreignness of the text to show through.

This paper's objective is not the verification of the retranslation hypothesis whose arguments have been tested several times and limitations identified by translation scholars. Nevertheless, the retranslation hypothesis provides the necessary theoretical background for our enquiry and the identification of process, reasons and products of retranslation. Though the term 'retranslation' gives the general idea of having multiple translations towards a single source text, the developments in the theoretical conceptualisations of the same have seen several attempts at definition. According to Koskinen and Paloposki, retranslation (as a product) denotes a second or later translation of a single source text into the same target language. Retranslation (as a process) is thus prototypically a phenomenon that occurs over a period of time, but in practice, simultaneous or near-simultaneous translations also exist (Koskinen & Paloposki 2010: 294).

Retranslation, as Susam-Saraveja defines it, refers to the subsequent translations of a text or part of a text, carried out after the initial translation that introduced this text to the same target language' (2003: 2). For the purpose of this paper, these definitions are adhered to. Apart from the conceptualization of retranslation and the 'retranslation hypothesis', retranslation's other concerns of inquiry include the motivations and reasons for retranslation, the distinction between retranslating and revising and approaches to retranslation. What we consider here is a rare instance of the first translator herself making a retranslation and with a long interval that has witnessed several shifts and progressive waves in the ideologies and politics of the source text between them, the challenge to discern the classifications 'revision' and 'retranslation' only becomes more intricate. There have been several attempts by Translation Studies scholars to draw a clear distinction between the both by way of concrete definitions. The attempt to examine Sankaranarayan's translations of *Agnisakshi* bears the encumbrance of determining if the later translation qualifies to be a 'retranslation' or just a 'revision'. The earlier theories of retranslation guides, as Chesterman points out, to an understanding that while revision focuses on a previous translation, retranslation does it on original.

Outi Paloposki and Kaisa Koskinen in their article titled "Reprocessing Texts: The Fine Line between Retranslating and Revising", raise objections to "neat categorizations" of revision and retranslation. They argue that some so-called revisions are actually retranslations because there are so many substantial revisions that the first translator's voice gets lost in the new revised translation. Similarly, Anthony Pym also views revision as a kind of retranslation. He observes that "[t]he retranslation may return to the ST [source text] and start from scratch, or modify existing translations but with significant reference to the ST" (quoted in Tian 2017: 3). However, he further claims that "a retranslation is not just a modified or corrected edition of a previous translation".

Given that Paloposki and Koskinen's criterion to identify a retranslation requires one to "compare bibliographical entries and look for one source text with at least two target texts with different translators" (2010: 36), a comparative study of Sankaranarayanan's translations presents a complicated case of enquiry. A resolution of the same can be reached by deciphering the diverging approaches and ideological positions she assumes towards the source text in the process of translation. If the first translation of the novel reveals Sankaranarayan to be an admiring translator in awe of the author's prose, the second translation shows an almost 'different' translator, who is ideologically empowered and ready for a "reinterpretation" of the text through her critical eyes. 'Revision' might, after all, be inadequate to describe the second translation in this context. Notably, neither Mini Krishnan, editor of OUP nor Sankaranarayanan refers to the project as revision but as "fresh translation" and "retranslation" (2015: xvii) respectively. The situation of self-retranslation, Wenqing Peng says, presents the translator and the retranslator as the same physical body, but with two different egos involved. Here, Sankaranarayan's retranslator ego is a product of changing historical and social context and the ideological clarity and perspective achieved thereof. Thus, the translator reflects and re-examines his/ her previous works from a different self, resulting in a different interpretation (Peng 2017: 121).

A significant point of enquiry among the several, regarding the concept of retranslation, is the motivation behind the project of retranslation. Is it merely a matter of aesthetic concern or does it

harbour reasons that are ideological, political and cultural? Recognizing the tacit interests is also an imperative to assert the term 'retranslation' for Sankaranarayanan's project.

Siobhan Brownlie observes that, "retranslations are undertaken because there has been a change in ideologies and/or norms in the initiating culture (usually the target culture), and the translation is thought to have aged or is unacceptable because it no longer conforms to the current ways of thinking or behaving. The study of retranslations can thus reveal changing norms and ideologies in society" (2006: 150).

Berman, as the earliest proponent of the 'retranslation hypothesis', attributes the appearance of retranslations to the idea that translations become old and decay. Berman and Bensimon suggest that more source-oriented translations are called for because of the assimilating qualities in the initial translation. Besides this observation, Berman also imparts an ontological cause for the existence of retranslations, which is the obliteration or diminishing of the failures (*la defaillance*) of the initial translation. Theoretical arguments for the motivations behind retranslations range from shifts in linguistic and stylistic norms to shifts in the context of text reception.

Talking about bringing out a fresh translation and the factors necessitating the same after a considerable period after the initial translation, Mini Krishnan, editor of Oxford University Press (OUP), attributes both ideological and aesthetic reasons for the publication. While mentioning about feeling the need for a "better and careful rendering of the novel with proper contextualization and closer attention to different registers in the book", Krishnan also recollects about feeling the first translation to be an amateurish work of translation in terms of readability. Evaluating the motives for retranslation, translation theorists have reviewed the situations where the publisher plays the crucial role. One of those is when the publisher expects that a retranslation may introduce a new interpretation of the source text or address a different readership (Gürçağlar 2009: 235).

Krishnan's justifications for a retranslation and Sankaranarayan's own words about translating the same text a second time are not dissimilar to Adrienne Rich's idea of 'Re-vision', which serves as a

powerful concept in the historicization of female narratology. It must be noted that the concept does not bear a reference to the categorizations that vexed the retranslation theorists. The strategy with which Sankaranarayanan approaches retranslation reiterates Rich's conceptualization of writing as re-vision, which, as "the act of … entering the old text with new critical direction" is "an act of survival". Sankaranarayanan, in her note to the second translation, points out her updated knowledge on gender politics acquired over the years as the motivating force and justification for her retranslation.

Agnisakshi

Agnisakshi, with its accurate depiction of the social evils and oppression faced by women within the upper caste Nambuthiri[1], is a remarkable text in the history of Malayalam Novel. Set in the backdrop of community reform movement and nationalist movement, it narrates the story of a Nambuthiri woman, Devaki Manampalli/ Thethikutty, who breaks the patriarchal norms which restrict the life of Nambuthiri women within the four walls of 'Illams'[2]. The importance of Antrajanam's writing in the landscape of feminist literature is her characterization of a female subjectivity whose empowerment does not lie entirely with the benevolence of a 'Reformer Man'. She presents a woman who refuses to be a passive subject waiting to be reformed by the Reformer Man. Thethikutty, the protagonist in the novel, who walks out of the oppressive domestic spaces and asserts her vocal presence in public spaces and political movements and later calmly embraces spirituality, and does so on her own.

The Self-Reflexive Retranslator: Ideologies and Motivations

An in-depth reading of the translator's note which Sankaranarayanan provides for the first translation reveals that no reference is made to the politics the novel embodies or its significance. While proclaiming her admiration for Antharjanam's

[1] One of the dominant Brahmin castes native to Kerala.
2 Term used to refer Nambuthiri dwellings.

prose which is 'poetic' and rich in 'stunning imagery', she also points out the challenges she had to face during the translation process. Apart from the obvious hurdle posed by the linguistic translation of colloquial words and ideas specific to the Nambutiri community, Sankaranarayanan also points out the particularities of Antharjanam's literary language, comprising of 'short, pithy words' in place of complete sentences. The translation was done, in translator's words, by paying attention to the language and the particularities of it which make it an 'extraordinary' novel. In all of this, she assumes an uncritical, adulatory approach towards the original.

On the other hand, the translator's note in the second translation points out how the retranslation project was conceptualized with the idea of reinterpretation of the classic novel through fresh translation. Contrary to the first translation, Sankaranarayan, in her note, alludes directly to the literary, political and social significance of the novel. She refers to the politics of gender central to the text by referring to the female protagonists of the novel who dare to break the shackles laid by customs and traditions of the community and make a place for themselves in the world under the tutelage of no man. Identifying herself more closely with the author, Sankaranarayanan also reveals her familiarity with the traditions of the Nambutiri community owing to her grandfather who belonged to the caste. Unlike before, she asserts her identity, both as a member of the Nambutiri caste and a feminist here.

In the translator's note as given in the second translation, Sankaranarayanan herself comes to terms with the idea of translation as a political activity, central to the historicization of female narratology as it renders a reinterpretation. In her words, retranslating the novel would be "honoring her charismatic presence in Malayalam literature, especially in the early women's writing of Kerala through retranslation and reinterpretation" (2015: xvii). "I have tried to put into words my own estimation and analysis of Agnisakshi as a literary product". What transpires from a comprehensive analysis of her translator's notes is her employment of the same as a translation strategy in itself. Referred to as choices made from a "sociocritical standpoint", feminist translation

interventions, in Flotow's words, "becomes an educational tool supported by scholarly research" (Flotow 1991: 77). The preface or translator's note becomes the platform where Sankaranarayanan pronounces the ideological standpoint and the critical approaches behind the choices she makes.

Sankaranarayanan does not hesitate from criticizing Antharjanam's characterization and she points out a final succumb to the tradition, the sanctity of family, marriage and motherhood. As she critically analyzes Antharjanam's representation of gender politics, Sankaranarayanan differentiates between the languages given to both the female characters and points out how the language is used by the author to divide compassion unequally between them. Comparing the translator's notes Sankaranarayan provides for the two translations, a transformation of the translator from an admiring reader to a politically contemporary critic can be observed. It is this transformation which makes the transference of gender questions as raised by Antarjanam in the original, into English possible.

Sankaranarayanan, in her later translation, presents herself as a translator who is aware of the flaws of the author's feminist writing. She points out that while Antarjanam undeniably wrote from a woman's point of view, she was unable to "completely free herself from the norms of patriarchy" (xxi) and "Lalithambika was a product of her times" (2015: xxi). In addition to a critique of the gender politics the text advocates, Sankaranarayan also does not hesitate to criticize the literary style of Lalithambika Antharjanam. She says, "Language loses its literary quality and turns into didactic prose" and this is in incongruous with the admirative preface she provides in the first translation.

Retranslation as 'Re-vision' - A Comparative Analysis of the Two Translations

While her writing exposes the harsh realities of lived-in experiences of Nambuthiri women, Antharjanam's prose is replete with the grammar and imagery evoking the ritualistic life of the community, the very institution that her protagonist seeks emancipation from. Reading through the stylistic features of her writing, rich in references from the traditions and Puranas, her

writing can itself be seen as a translational act of subversion where she exports a female subjectivity rebelling against the Brahminical patriarchy into the language of the latter. The language becomes a political site of resistance, wherein the female author has to "translate themselves into or out of the language of patriarchy" (Bose). Understanding the nuances of Antharjanam's manipulation of language is central to the acknowledgement of the politics of gender it embodies and thereby to an analysis of its translations into another language.

In the first translation, Sankaranaraynan had translated most of the culturally specific Malayalam terms, to English. As she mentions in the translator's note, the motivation for her decision to translate the novel emerged from the admiration and empathy for it and wanted it to be "read and appreciated" not just in India but outside the country as well. Hence, she takes the course of domestication strategy for her translation, wherein the foreignness of the text, here the jargon specific to the Nambutiri community, is minimized as much as possible. Though she does retain some specific terms with explanatory footnotes provided, many significant terms, including all the kinship terms, are retranslated. In Bensimon's arguments constituting the Retranslation Hypothesis, he describes first translations as 'naturalizations' whose function is the introduction of the source text in the target culture. In the attempt to increase the readability of the text in the target culture, as Gambier says, "a first translation always tends to be more assimilating, tends to reduce the otherness in the name of cultural or editorial requirements". What gets diminished in the process is the ideological foundation of Antharjanam's writing and the politics of gender she espouses in her novel. For example, thematically significant terms like *antharjanam, ghosha* and *marakkuda* are translated as Nambutiri bride, purdah system and umbrella, respectively in the first translation. 'Antharjanam', literally means 'people who live in the interiors' and indicated the lives of reclusion they were forced to lead. Ghosha, is the system of veiling among Antharjanams. Meanwhile, 'marakkuda' (or the cadjan umbrella), the symbol of their chastity, was a mandatory object to be carried by Nambudiri women to conceal their face and body while stepping out in public. These were significant markers of the repressive lives Nambutiri women had to

lead within the darker interiors of their illams. While Sankaranarayanan's translation may not be totally incorrect in its meaning, it effaces the historical and cultural markers and traditions that made up the everyday living reality of Nambutiri women and, thereby, undermines the politics of the original text which was a groundbreaking attempt to represent in literature the oppressed lives of Nambutiri women. A critical comparison reveals that her most noticeable interventions are in the cases of markers constituting domestic spaces. Her retention of terms 'tharavadu' and 'naalukettu' in the retranslation compared to the initial superficial translations as 'family' and 'conservative family dwelling' highlights the concreteness of the restrictive spaces they occupy. Compared to the abstractness of family, 'tharavadu' and 'nalukettu' stresses upon the physicality of the domestic space and thereby the impositions enforced on them. In a similar vein, she retains most of the culturally specific terms pertinent to the politics of the text in the second translation. These revisions to reflect the context better are all the more significant because the novel also dons the role of a historical commentary on the life and culture of the Nambutiri community.

An example for the conscious choices she makes in her retranslation is the translation of the phrase 'നമ്മൾ ഒന്നാണെന്ന്' (*nammal onnanennu*) in chapter 6 which is translated in the first as 'one in spirit' but translated as "one in body and spirit" in second translation. The first translation hides the physicality of the relationship between a wife and her husband while the latter exposes that. Even if Antharjanam's writing, probably owing to the then moral conventions, does not explicitly refer to it, the pathetic situation of Thethi, the protagonist, points to the unsatisfying conjugal relationship she had. This is an instance of feminist translational activity wherein a deliberate intervention is made to unveil the gendered discourse implicit in the text and make it explicit to the reader. Thethikutty, the protagonist who is forced to give up her desires in the presence of a husband who devoted his entire life to studying and carrying on rituals demanded by the Nambudiri community, yearns for romantic companionship and a fulfilling conjugal life. Instead, she is denied the physical pleasures of marital life by a repressive community system that encourages physical relationships with the sole purpose of production of an heir.

A similar contextual example of re-translation can be seen in the case of 'ഭർതൃസംഗമം' *(bharthrusangamam)*, which is translated as 'cohabitation' in the first translation and 'union' in the second one. Sankaranarayan's conscious choice in the retranslation is also suggestive of the idea of translation as 'rewriting' where, as Eleanora Federici says, "the visible translator is faithful to her reading of the ST, her understanding of the author and her capability as an interpreter of words".

While the orthodox Nambuthiri community at the time was observed to be against modern education in general and women's higher education in particular, the narrator Thankam, the offspring of a traditional marital arrangement between a Nambuthiri man and a Nair woman called *sambandham*[3], is a woman who has broken that taboo through her relentless persuasion. Looking at some of the revisions Sankaranarayanan makes in the context, it bears witness to a translator who feels much stronger about women's education in those orthodox times than the author. Providing basic education is described by the author in the common Malayalam phrase as "*naalaksharam padippikkunnath"* (Antharjanam 1976: 23), a literal translation of which means 'teaching a few words'. While the first translation of the phrase shows "some formal education" (*1980:* 34), in the second translation it is given as "suitably educated" (2015: 26). English education was looked down with scorn by the elders of the community "*parishkarathil valarthunnath*" (Antharjanam 1976: 23) which was translated as "brought up in a sophisticated way" (1980: 34) in the first gets changed to "being educated in modern ways" (*Fire, My Witness* 25). The context in the novel shows the narrator who stands up to the conservative ways of the community to assert her demand for higher education. Her uncompromising stance, referred as "*vittuveezhchayillayma*" (Antharjanam 1976: 37), is translated as "stubbornness" (1980: 52) in the first and "unyielding" (2015: 44) in the second. Along the same lines, "*thannishtam*", which has a negative connotation in the context of Malayalam, gets translated as "selfish stubbornness" in the first but unapologetic,

[3] Casual alliances, condoned by the prevalent social system, wherein Nambutiri men formed liaisons with women from other castes like Nairs, Ambalavasis and Kshatriyas.

"stubborn self-willed" in the second. The word, which is used by the character as she introspects her own stubborn stance to her father is rendered free of the negative subtext suggested by both the author and Sankaranarayanan herself as the first translator. Through these choices of correction, Sankaranaryanan brings more clarity to the character whose fierceness gets her desire to get educated, fulfilled.

A further example of the revision made in the retranslation is that of the word 'മാനഭംഗപ്പെട്ടന്ന' [*maanabhangappedunnu - maaanam* (honor) + *bhangappeduka* (ruined)], which is translated by Sankaranarayanan as 'dishonored' in the first translation and as 'raped' in the second. Though the literal meaning of the term does not go against her first translation, the change she made in the second indicates the gender-conscious intervention she makes as a feminist translator. The same example is seen repeated when Sankaranarayanan translates '*manabhangapetta sthreekal*" (Antharjanam 1976: 95) as "outraged women" (1980: 135) in her first translation but 'corrects' it to "raped women" (2015*:* 123) in the second one. A deliberate intervention is made by the translator to correct the patriarchal understanding, of where the honor of a woman lies and how it is brought to its ruin by an act of sexual violence perpetrated against her, which her first translation uncritically carried over from the source text. When the corrective interference from the part of the translator discards a concept no longer agreeable to the socio-political currents of the contemporary world, translation here becomes a historically-conscious process declarative of the shifts and turns that transpired in the trajectory of politics of language and gender. By doing so, an unequivocal feminist statement is made by the translator, asserting the retranslation project to be an act of activism. Sankaranarayanan's choices support Tymozcko's words, "even when a translator is not a political activist, the translator's agency is notable and powerful because of inherent ethical and ideological vectors of textual choices at all these levels" (2014: 216). In her second translator's note, Sankaranarayan bases her reanalysis of the novel's content on the clarity and awareness she has acquired about feminist ideologies over the years. Therefore, her translation here stands as a testimony of her ideological empowerment on account of what Tymozcko

identifies as 'self-reflexivity'. In her argument that "self-reflexivity about translator's place of enunciation and affiliation is the guide to actual choices in translation", she pronounces self-awareness to be the imperative for the ideological, political and ethical agency (2014: 219), which is decisive in the process and product of translation.

Even though the novel has gained a status of significance in literary history, Antharjanam has not gone uncriticized. Limited within a heterosexual framework of domesticity and bearing several markers of her caste, class and elite social location, the feminist discourse in Antharjanam's writing may be found questionable by contemporary feminists of Kerala (Devika 2013: 108). As already mentioned, Sankaranarayanan, in her note, reiterates her criticism of Antarjanam being a "traditionalist" and her attempts to strike a balance between tradition and modernity. A nuanced intervention she makes in this regard can be read in her translation of Antarjanam's "*aacharalanghanakkuttangal*" (1976: 53), the phrase used to refer all the violations of traditions that happened before Thethi's acts of rebellion. By translating this as "previous crimes consisting of violating the existing customs" (1980: 73) in the first translation, Sankaranarayan concurs with the author's grammar of tradition that attaches culpability. In her second translation the phrase is retranslated "previous shocking act that broke social codes", highlighting translator's critique of author's strict adherence to 'traditionalism' (2015: 66).

Sankaranarayanan's note in the retranslation also carries criticism for Antarjanams's languorous representation of lower castes considering the depicted time period which saw the struggles for freedom and social justice by all groups. The representation is further enfeebled in the first translation when the mentions of names of lower castes are diluted as just 'lower castes'. In the second translation, the retranslator, Sankaranarayanan, takes care to retain every non-Brahmanical caste name like 'Sudra' mentioned in the ST, indicating a nuanced approach that is conscious of the politics of caste. Moreover, the retention of the names, for example 'Variar' community, also becomes relevant for the readership to have a better knowledge of the system of *sambandham* practiced by Nambuthiri men.

In her own words, Sankaranarayanan's first translation had an 'element of hero worship' and even in the absence of any acknowledgement of the social significance the text upholds, she expresses her veneration for the beauty of Antharjanam's prose and the literariness it exudes. As her priority as a translator was the transference of that literary quality, several cultural markers particular to the ritualistic life of Nambudiris were translated to increase the readability. While doing so, she attempts to use ellipsis, otherwise absent in the text, to bring out the poetic quality of Antrajanam's prose. Used at the beginning of the narrative, it can be comprehended as an attempt to suggest the fragmentariness of protagonist's thoughts. Antarjanam's original text is divided into 18 chapters, each with a title indicative of the content. While her first translation lacks chapter titles, Sankaranarayanan, in her second translation, provides a free translation – not always word-to-word – based on her own reading of the chapters. This is a reiteration of her claims of translation as 'reinterpretation' and announces a 'visible' translator who is distant and independent.

Analyzing the two translations, it can be inferred that the transference of the sense of socio- cultural context and linguistic markers becomes a priority rather than the word-by-word meaning. Translator also becomes a critic as the relevance of the gender questions raised by Antharjanam are not to be isolated from the socio-cultural realities particular to the Nambuthiri community. The retranslation by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan can be seen as an instance of Godard's conceptualization of 'womanhandling', wherein the "feminist translator affirming her critical difference, her delight in in-terminable rereading and rewriting, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. 'Woman handling' the text in translation means replacing the modest, self- effacing translator. The translator becomes an active participator in the creation of meaning" (Godard 2021: 50).

Conclusion

While discussing the 'creation of value' of retranslations, Lawrence Venuti argues that "retranslations justify themselves by establishing their difference from one or more previous versions"

(2003: 25). The retranslation project of *Agnisakshi* undertaken by the same translator validates Venuti's observation that it is assumed that the differences are guided more by social or ideological premises than by the literary or linguistic lack in the previous translations (2003: 25).

A close examination of Sankaranarayanan's second translation in terms of the motivations behind the project and the choices she makes as a translator shows that the 'defaillance' in this case is the diminishing of the politics of social progressiveness that drove the writings of Antharjanam. In Carol Maier's words, "it is the responsibility of translators to reflect on their thinking in political terms, to reflect on their motives and on the effect their work might have on the reader". Following the same in this context, Sankaranarayan, by way of retranslation, "adds a new dimension to its contents from a feminist perspective". Retranslation, in this case, becomes the act of 're-vision' of the gender discourse highlighted by the novel and the demonstration of how the ideological empowerment of the translator plays out in the process of retranslation.

References

Antharjanam, Lalithambika. 2016. *Agnisakshi*. Kerala: D C Books.

Antharjanam, Lalithambika. 1980. *Agnisakshi.* (Vasanthi Sankaranarayan, Trans.). Kerala: Kerala Sahitya Akademi.

Antharjanam, Lalithambika. 2015. *Agnisakshi: Fire, My Witness*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Brownlie, Siobhan. 2006. Narrative Theory and Retranslation Theory. *Across Languages and Cultures* 7(2). 145–70. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1556/Acr.7.2006.2.1.

Deane-Cox, Sharon. 2016. *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation.* London: Bloomsbury.

Devika, J. 2013. *Womanwriting = Manreading?* Zubaan in collaboration with Penguin Books.

Federici, Eleonora. 2011. The Visibility of Woman Translator. In Eleonora Fredici (Ed.), *Translating Gender.* Bern: Peter Lang.

Gambier, Yves, and Luc van Doorslaer. (Eds.). 2010. *Handbook of Translation Studies: Vol. 1*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co.

Godard, Barbara. 2022. Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation. In Eva C. Karpinski and Elena Basile (Eds.), *Translation, Semiotics, and Feminism: Selected Writings of Barbara Godard*. London: Routledge.

Koskinen, K., and Outi Paloposki. 2010. Retranslation. In Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Eds.), Handbook *of Translation Studies: Vol. 1*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co pp. 294–98.

Koskinen, K., and Outi Paloposki. 2010. Reprocessing the Text: The Fine Line between Retranslating and Revising. *Across Languages and Cultures* 11(1), 29-49.

Lawrence Venuti. 2003. Retranslations: The creation of value. *Bucknell Review* 47(1), 25-39.

Maier, Carol. 1998. Issues in the Practice of Translating Women's Fiction. *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 75 (1). 95–108. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/000749098760110657.

"OUP Brings out Fresh Translation of Agnisakshi." *The Hindu*, 13 Apr. 2015. *www.thehindu.com*, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/oup-brings-out-fresh-translation-of-agnisakshi/article7100595.ece.

Peng, Wenqing. 2017. Self-Retranslation as Intralingual Translation: Two Special Cases in Translations of San Guo Yan Yi. *Language and Semiotic Studies*, 3(2). 110–27.

Rich, Adrienne. 1972. When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision. *College English,* 34 (1). 18-38. *DOI:* https://doi.org/ 10.2307/ 375215.

Tian, Chuanmao. 2017. Retranslation Theories: A Critical Perspective. *English Literature and Language Review* 3(1). 1–11.

Tymozcko, Maria. 2014. *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*. London: Routledge.

Zafer Güneş, Alper. 2019. A Conceptual Inquiry: What May Retranslation Offer for Translation Studies Research? *TransLogos Translation Studies Journal*, 2(1). 47–67. *DOI:* https://doi.org/10.29228/transLogos.2/1.3.

***

About the Authors

Chythan Ann George
Chythan Ann George is a PhD student at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies (CALTS), University of Hyderabad.
Email: annrose007[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Sriparna Das
Sriparna Das is an Assistant Professor of Translation Studies at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies (CALTS), University of Hyderabad.
Email: sriparna2006[AT]uohyd[DOT]ac[DOT]in

Cite this Work:

George, Ann Chythan & Das, Sriparna. 2023. Retranslation as Re-vision and Self-Reflective Criticism: A Comparative Analysis of Two Translations of Agnisakshi from Malayalam to English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 45-60.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar3

The 'Translated' Cityscape:
A Study of Select Satyajit Ray Films[1]

CHANDRANI CHATTERJEE

Abstract

The present paper attempts to examine the 'translated' nature of the cityscapes in Satyajit Ray's films. With a select reading of films like 'Mahanagar' (lit. The Big City, 1963) and 'Pratidwandi' (The Adversary also called Siddhartha and the City, 1970), I argue for the ways in which the city becomes a space of contestation, debate, negotiation and translation between clashing ideologies of the old and the new, the rural and the urban, the ancient and the modern. Ray's films have been studied from several perspectives, in terms of thematic, stylistic and ideological development. However, it seems to me that the city and its 'translational' aspect have not received enough attention. The present paper proposes to understand the role the city plays in Ray's cinema. As an avant garde film maker, Ray's cinema is replete with moments of conflicting ideologies, transitions and crossovers. It seems to me that the city provides the base for several such negotiations and intersections in Ray. Using certain recent developments in Translation Studies, I propose to read episodes in select Ray films as indicative of a larger ideological and cultural shift necessitated and made possible by/in the new space of the city. As a translating and translated space, the city's agency enables other changes and transformations which would not have been possible in the absence of this primary actor – the city. The present paper is an attempt to look at several such moments of intersections and translations that Ray's films make available to us.

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the17th International MELOW Conference on 'Space, Place and Language in Literatures of the World', Dharamshala, 9-11th, March, 2018. I am grateful to the questions and discussion from the audience and conference participants which helped me rethink some ideas presented here.

Keywords: City, Translation, Translational, Palimpsest, Transformation, Satyajit Ray.

Introduction: Locating the City in Translation Theory

Can we think of the city space in translational terms? Following recent developments in Translation Studies the city has been recognized as a site for/an agent in translation. Iain Chambers in his '*The Translated City*', for example, remarks: "Cities as the sites of cultural encounters – from fifth century Athens with its Greeks, Persians and Egyptians, to present-day multi-cultured Los Angeles – are precisely where the outside world pushes into our interiors to propose immediate proximities […] as the concentrated locality of such processes, and their augmented velocity, the city continually proposes the urgency of considering life, both ours, and that of others, in the transit proposed by translation" (1-3).

In her 2012 book *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory*, Sherry Simon, draws our attention to the 'polyglot' nature of urban spaces: "There are no monolingual cities: all are sites of encounter and gathering and languages are part of the mix. But central to my project is the idea that each city imposes its own patterns of interaction and these emerge out of their spaces and their own narrative pasts. Contact, transfer and circulation among languages are determined by the demographics, institutional arrangements and imaginative histories of urban life. The cultural meanings of these transactions emerge through already ongoing conversations and aesthetic traditions" (Simon 2012: 2).

Simon goes on to suggest that it is not enough to call these cities bilingual, they are 'translational' in nature.

"These cities are not bilingual: they are translational. This term more adequately accounts for the range of relations which sustain the urban imagination – relations that include the indifference and negation as well as engagement and creative interference. Movement across languages is marked by the special intensity that comes from a shared history, a common territory and the situation of contending rights. Successful negotiation across these commonalities and differences becomes the very condition of civic coexistence" (Simon 2012: 3).

I use the word ‘translational’ in the above sense that recent scholarship in the field of Translation Studies has been using the term. I am particularly interested in the way Edwin Gentzler’s recent work on translation and rewriting has opened up the field for further enquiry. Gentzler alerts us to the need of acknowledging this larger and more prominent presence of translation in our lives:

> [...] I argue that rather than thinking about translation as a somewhat process of ferrying ideas across borders, we instead think about translation as one of the most important processes that can lead to revitalizing culture, a proactive force that continually introduces new ideas, forms or expressions, and pathways for change (Gentzler 2017: 8).

Following this line of conceptualization, we can regard translational cultures as being ‘palimpsestic’ in nature – a process that involves different linguistic registers for certain, but also involves creative interferences like the ones that will be discussed in this article. The multilingual context and the different linguistic and literary translations in the nineteenth century Calcutta make it an apt illustration of a translational culture.

Satyajit Ray’s cinematic oeuvre depicts similar moments in the city - a translational city juggling with linguistic and cultural registers for creative expression, a fascination with the city space and the socio-cultural patterns that it generates. The city enables certain discourse and ways of life which though distinctly visible in Ray’s cinema, is often shrouded by the international acclaim for the portrayal of rural Bengal in his films. However, in Ray’s films the city has also been used as a modernist trope; commenting on the *ennui*, and fragmentary nature of life in the urban space and on the other, the city is also a site of negotiation and exchange, transformation and transactions. I look upon this space of negotiation and exchange that the city creates as ‘translational’ - a space of experimentation, innovation, movement and circulation vis-à-vis prevalent discourse, ideologies and identities. I will attempt to read the city in some of Ray’s films as a space for similar translations. From Iain Chambers we have learnt that the forces of translation in the city “can be traced in multiple forms and formations: in the phenomenology of everyday life; in musical,

pictorial, and literary aesthetics; in clothing and culinary practices; in debating questions of faith; and in renewing the lexicon of philosophical and critical discourse" (Chambers: 102). A reading of select Ray films will help elucidate the above.

Pratidwandi: The City as a Space of Conflict and Negotiation

In Ray's films, similar forces of translation are repeatedly visible in the depiction of a post-colonial Calcutta. In *Pratidwandi* (1970, The Adversary) the presence of the city cannot be overlooked. Chronicling the life in Calcutta of the 1960s through the eyes of the unemployed intellectual Siddhartha, the film captures several moments of frustration and enquiry mediated through the city. The movie opens with death, a motif that recurs in several forms through the film, death in terms of estrangement, alienation of human dreams and ambitions. It is noteworthy that all this is mediated through the city, the space that creates and maintains life, but the one that also becomes the space for death, both literally and metaphorically. Calcutta of the 1960's, a city torn in conflicts, undergoing crisis of different kinds is also the city of Siddhartha's struggle. Strangely, this is a city that seems to be the source of all Siddhartha's misery, but there is a strong refusal to leave the city. Siddhartha keeps postponing job interviews that require him to leave Calcutta. The magic of the city, the melting pot of change and transformation that the city stands for, is repeatedly invoked in the course of the movie in varied ways.

After the opening scene of death, the credits appear to be travelling through the streets of the city, with the camera focusing on the movement of a bus, a means of public transport, connecting and ferrying the inhabitants of the city to their different destinations.[2]

[2] I would like to draw attention to the etymology of the word translation here. Trans + ferre, referring to movement, transfer and constant negotiation and exchange that any process of translation involves. Ray's cinema deploys the idea of movement, transfer and ferrying constantly through the streets of the city. The images used in this article are from the films cited which are available in the

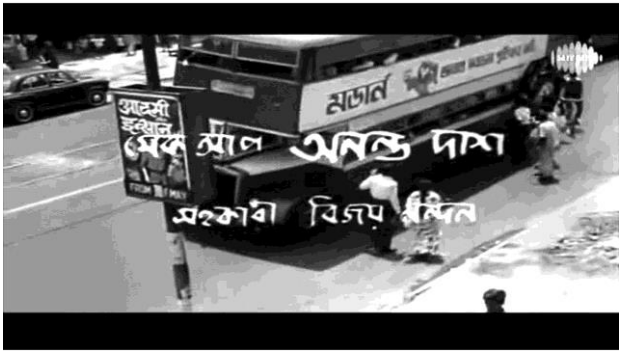

Fig 1

Fig 2

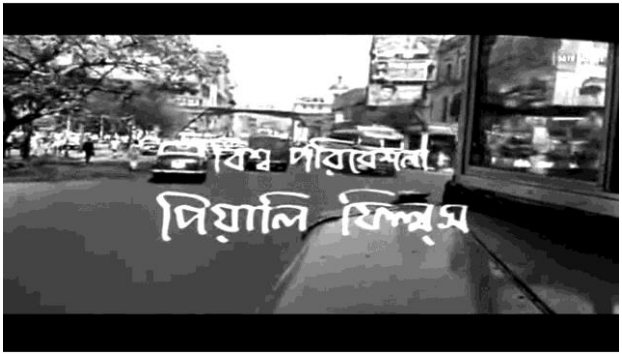

Fig 3

public domain. Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are from the film Pratidwandi accessible on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enjp-LfY33s

This opening image of traversing through the city, a *flaneur* like presence becomes a recurrent motif in the film. Siddhartha is repeatedly shown walking the crowded streets, and the overbearing presence of the city, it's architecture, it's people, it's economy, it's food cannot be divested from Siddhartha's journey in search of a job. As Iain Chambers reminds us, "A location is always the site of cultural appropriation and historical transformation, the site of a particular manner and economy of building, dwelling and thinking" (Chambers: 106). Siddhartha becomes the subject in Ray's film for exploring the interconnectedness of the space that is the city and the space that the individual occupies therein.

Fig 4

Fig 5

This space, however, is both of alienation and translation. The film focuses on Siddharth's alienation amidst the crowded streets of Calcutta. He seems to be in his own world despite being surrounded by people always. This is rather symptomatic of the modern city which alienates and connects at the same time. The translated nature of Calcutta that the film depicts, is a 'dual city' in the sense in which Sherry Simon uses the term in her *Cities in Translation*. In elucidating what she means by 'dual cities', Simon says, "The special character of these cities lies in the presence of two historically rooted language communities who feel a sense of entitlement to the same territory. Each language is supported by institutions of similar authority – university, writer's association, publishing houses and governmental recognition" (Simon 2012: 3).

Particularly poignant in this regard is the interview episode in the film. Siddhartha is asked by a fellow applicant about the nature of such interviews and whether the questions will be in English. Through Siddhartha's entire interview, no one speaks in Bengali, the

impeccable accent and tone of British English cannot go unnoticed in the film. Often English and Bengali are used interchangeably. Ray scholars like Suranjan Ganguly notes how in Ray's films set after 1947, the British are nowhere to be seen, yet their language lives on, spoken by India's ruling elite, the westernized bourgeoisie.[3]. For Ray, the cultural critic deeply interested in the mechanisms of culture-making, this reversal is crucial in defining the postcolonial ethos in the India that his films portray. In the films about urban life made in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this syndrome is clearly visible. English, the language of power, of moving up the social and economic ladder, the language of modernity and the urban space that it signifies, is also the language of the other, and of othering. The cityscape is a constant witness to this othering, to a class of values and ideals that is only possible in the polyglot city.

Translating Gender in the City

If language is one way of othering, so is gender and its execution in the city space – gender becomes an important site of contestation and negotiation in the city. This happens in several ways, but particularly noteworthy is the transformation witnessed in terms of female agency and its execution in the urban space and it's new found energy. As Brinda Bose rightly notes:

> The city has occupied an ambivalent position in the Indian nationalist imaginary throughout the process of nation-building, often a confrontational, as well as contemplative space that signifies 'modernity' and its concurrent promise as well as ills in relation to the 'traditional' ethics of a very old culture, even while representing progress and development (presumably by Western frameworks of evaluation). Such progress has been traditionally perceived in India as a moral degeneracy of the nation (perhaps necessary but nevertheless demeaning), easily analogous with female sexual transgression/promiscuity - with the nation personified as woman (mother, goddess, mistress, prostitute). What makes this signifier interesting, however, is its simultaneous admission of a

[3] See, Suranjan Ganguly, 'In Search of India: Rewriting Self and Nation in Satyajit Ray's Days and Nights in the Forest.' Journal of South Asian Literature, Vol. 30, No. 1/2, Miscellany, 1995, pp 162-172.

> metamorphosed autonomy of the female Indian self. Non-normative female behaviour - particularly sexual - has always constituted a liminal space, a site of both empowerments through transgression and containment through regulation. The urban space - newly freed up and as yet un-proscribed, assumes the metonymic equivalence of available sexual freedom for women, its powers and its dangers (Bose 2008: 35).

The autonomy of the female self, her new found agency and its depiction in Ray's films have been much discussed. But the liminality of this space, this in-between domain which both generates and controls the agency is what I would like to draw attention to. The palimpsestic nature of this liminal space in Ray's cinema deserves attention. In *Pratidwandi*, there are repeated flashbacks to a childhood of innocence, an idyllic world, one untouched by the urban space and its newness. This is contrasted with the new woman, the kinds like the nurse who works part time as a sex worker or his own sister who is unlike the image of Siddharth's flashbacks.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7 [4]

It seems as if the old space has been written over to create the new woman, the independent, modern and not so innocent sister of Siddharth whose transgressive behavior is repeatedly under question in the same space that has provided her a job, freedom and a life of her own.

The historical and political context of the characters who encounter the city and in turn translate and get translated by the city

[4] The images used in this article are from the films cited which are available in the public domain. Fig. 6 and 7 are from the film *Pratidwandi* accessible on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enjp-LfY33s

would need some closer analysis. In *Mahanagar* (1963, The Big City), Arati's family was trying to gain a foothold in post-partition Calcutta when women from middle-class refugee families were compelled to look for a job to support the family. On the other hand, Siddhartha's Calcutta was the product of intense political churning of various hues. Arati and Siddhartha's varied negotiations of the city indicate the many ways in which the personal and the political, the home and the world connected in the urban space of the city. While for the male protagonist, Siddhartha, the city seems to be stifling and alienating at one level, to Arati, the city opens up new opportunities and is liberating. The conflict between the outer world of the city and the space of the family is also different for the two characters. On one hand, Siddhartha seems to be full of rage and ultimately leaves the city, while on the other, Arati tries to negotiate and accommodate her new routine with familial duties. Their gender identities undoubtedly play a vital role in the ways in which they negotiate the city and its spaces. These negotiations are mediated through the city and its many players. The metaphor of the palimpsest becomes meaningful in understanding the urban space. For these spaces are of conflict and contestations where the old and the new jostle for existence. Spaces are written over to create new meanings and ways of life, but the writing over does not erase the old completely. In fact, the battle for space, the old and the new contesting the new-found space seems to be a recurrent motif in Ray's films. These are again intricately connected with questions of gender, language, space and movement which human agents traverse and make sense of.

In *Mahanagar* (1963, The Big City) for example, the change is lamented by the eldest in the Mazumdar family. He laments that he is unable to recognize Calcutta and its people, its streets and its new-found morals; morals that make his daughter-in-law take up a job and work for meeting the economic needs of the family. This 'unreal city', is beyond the recognition of those who are unable to come to terms with its rapid transforming nature. But even those who are the proponents of the new values of the city suffer from misrecognition. *Mahanagar*, has an interesting episode when Aarti, returning from her office, her new-found freedom and agency, narrates excitedly to

her husband about how her boss has appreciated her work and her promptness and efficiency, claiming that her husband would not have recognized her when she was at work. To this enthusiastic outburst of Aarti's, her husband sarcastically questions if he would be able to recognize her even at home? She seems changed, different, unrecognizable. Aarti, bringing her face close to her husband's says, she is the same, "the wife of the house"! This moment of reiteration of her identity in terms of validating the old, the conventional and thereby the correct, at that specific moment when Aarti has just started enjoying the space that the new, big city has opened for her is noteworthy. The palimpsestic texture that this moment, in terms of making space for the old and the new, draws us close to the 'translated' nature of the city space.

Fig. 8

Fig. 9 [5]

As Amitabha Bhattacharya notes:

> In Ray's films, Calcutta appears often as a frame of reference, sometimes as an adversary, often in the background and sometimes as dominant. Individual beings live and survive, sometimes innocently, sometimes acquiescing, not infrequently with a sense of guilt and a troubled conscience, in a society which is fast changing (Bhattacharya 1990/1991: 301).

[5] The images used in this article are from the films cited which are available in the public domain. Fig. 8, 9 and 10 are from the film *Mahanagar* accessible on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjhjDLeQNH8

The Space of Possibilities and Routes in the City

It is this grappling and negotiation with the new space that makes a translational perspective workable in appreciating Ray’s films. Often, the spaces for such negotiations are cafés and street corners, public spaces which are also spaces of anonymity in the big and crowded city. One is reminded of the café scene in *Pratidwandi*, where Siddharth is lectured by a former college senior and current party leader about joining the party and the economic crisis of the present days. Cafés also feature in *Mahanagar*, where Aarti’s husband seeks refuge and solace from the boredom of his unemployed life in a café where he overhears Aarti’s conversation with a rich husband of her friend. These spaces of exchange, autonomy and anonymity are also spaces which open new routes, paths and possibilities.

Fig. 10

The modern city as Iain Chambers notes is both a space of roots and routes:

> The classical sense of the city is consistently connected with the immediate history of a defined territory, the expression of an autochthonous culture. Nevertheless, in every city roots invariably turn out to be routes, historical and cultural passages that crisscross urban space offering entry into, and exit from, the immediate procedures of the locality. […] In other words, how do we think of a city no longer in terms of an apparently homogeneous historical-

> cultural text, but as a permeable site suspended in the challenge of translating and being translated through the accommodation of cultural and historical heterogeneity? (Chambers 2012: 105).

It seems to me that Ray's movies take us through the possibilities/routes that the city opens for the characters and thus for us as viewers who follow and travel the same routes, through the crisscross and web like nature of the city. The city, as a site for debate, dialogues, changing ideologies and morals; as a site of conflict and resolution, which again is mediated through the presence of the city as the primary interlocutor to the shifting paradigms symbolized in and by the city. As Supriya Chaudhuri poignantly remarks:

> "And at all times there are the floating images of the city's streets and of a personal past: the vagrants, the hippies, the derelicts, the slum-dwellers (recalled in a shot which irrupts into the scene of the last interview), as well as the contents of Siddharth's dreams and memories. Siddharth imagines himself shooting his sister's employer, he dreams of his sister modeling a swimsuit, his brother facing a firing-squad. The film is as full of what does not happen as what does, the Real is inevitably absent except as an obscure object of desire" (Chaudhuri 2005: 266-67).

It seems to me that the possibility of these non-happenings can only be executed in the space that is the city. These routes and possibilities draw us as viewers, 'as Siddharth is drawn, into the city's flux and movement, a relentless pushing and crowding'. Movement, journey and the overall theme of quest seems to connect many of Ray's films together. Particularly, *Mahanagar* and *Pratidwandi* are replete with images of travel, public transport, crowded buses, trams, cars and masses of moving bodies. One is reminded of the images of the crowded public transports, pushing and shoving bodies, the opening image of Siddhartha almost hanging from the bus, trying to balance and pay his ticket fare to the bus conductor, is a familiar scene to those who have used or use public transport in Calcutta. The mundaneness of such images according to me, makes these extraordinary in perpetrating the ways in which the city and its presence invades every space of human living, translating those into the flow of city life.

Fig 11

Fig 12

The city has its own translational practices just as Siddhartha has his. Having studied medicine for two years Siddhartha's fascination for the human anatomy often manifests in his translating the human bodies that surround him into their basic skeletal structures. The boredom and frustration of the routine job interviews translates in Siddharath's imagination to an almost surreal rendition where he perceives skeletons waiting – translating thereby the death like nature of such wait and frustration into stark images of annihilation, while his classroom lectures on the human anatomy plays in the background.

Fig. 13 [6]

In *Mahanagar*, the final scene is particularly reminiscent of the possibilities that the city makes available to its residents. Gazing up at the sky and the skyscapers, Arati seemingly seekingly enquires if

[6] The images used in this article are from the films cited which are available in the public domain. Fig.11, 12 and 13 are from the film *Pratidwandhi* accessible on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enjp-LfY33s

in such a big city of enormous possibilities there will be no jobs for at least one of them? She has just given up her earlier job, as an act of protest towards the office management and as a gesture of solidarity towards her female colleague who has been wrongly removed from her job. In fact, the courage to speak up for the correct cause is something that is not only connected with Aarti's essential character, but also with her new-found agency and confidence in the big city of possibilities. Her husband confirms this when he says that Aarti has done something that he would not have been able to do in a similar situation. This is also a moment where the possibility of mending of their somewhat strained bond as a couple is envisaged. The viewer is left guessing at this moment whether this possibility is a result of Aarti's giving up her job and thus becoming an equal to her jobless husband? While not completely overlooking this reading, the final scene of the film is one of hope and the routes of possibilities – Aarti and her husband vanishing into the multitudes, the big city of possibilities, together this time, man and woman seeking a future in the city of dreams and longing. The way in which the two bodies move into the city, negotiating the city afresh, with new determination and grit, with new hope to question and challenge the dehumanizing aspects of the city on the one hand and to embrace the possibilities on the other. Neither Aarti, nor her husband is the same person with whom the film had begun. They have been translated in the city. "We are all translated beings", as Salman Rushdie would remind us much later in a different context.

Ray's Calcutta: The Translating City

Satyajit Ray's Calcutta was a fast-changing space of contestation and struggle. Calcutta often appears as a frame of reference in Ray's films – a frame that keeps shifting from a peripheral to a central location. Calcutta in Ray, operates in the shadows of the Bengal Renaissance, a period of developments and innovations both in the intellectual and socio-cultural domain. Ray's Calcutta is a city of possibilities, a city that has transformed and translated itself through the many shifts in the socio-cultural milieu. Be – be it in the coming of the railways, the institutionalized English education, the printing press, the rise of a new intelligentsia and the new dreams and

opportunities that came along with these transitions. The city witnesses these and many other transformations not as a passive onlooker, but as a participant – one who influences the course of action of the characters who enter the city and participate in the life the city creates. The city influences the decision of the characters, their choices and journeys which in turn translates into the spirit of the city. As Amitabha Bhattacharya reminds us, "[…] And to Satyajit Ray, Calcutta is much more than a living presence. It is in his blood-stream. A third generation Calcuttan, Satyajit grew in the city passing through its most profound transition. In his younger years, he came in direct contact with the great minds of India's modernisation like Rabindranath Tagore and later, personally experienced the trauma that metamorphosed the city and its psyche. He allowed himself to be exposed to all the influences that the city brought to bear on him, for he likes big cities "to engulf and bewilder" him. He took the adversity in his stride and, therefore, could see both faces of the city—the humanising and the dehumanising. Ray's films, attempting to capture this flux, would quite naturally be informed by a vision that is essentially urban." The city translates and is also translated. The intersection of human bodies and memories within the space of the city raises pertinent questions about ways in which the city becomes the melting pot of dreams, aspirations on the one hand and their shattering on the other. In *Mahanagar*, for example, the city is the means to Aarti's agency and freedom, it is the site of her aspirations and dreams; while for her father-in-law, the old idealist teacher, the transforming city symbolically represents the death of his values and ideologies. This clash of ideologies, it seems to me, is indicative of the ever-increasing fluid identities that the city space generates. Morals, beliefs and ideologies, ways of living, systems of livelihood flow and merge into each other. The city translates and colours individuals with its own imagination; such is the overwhelming power of the city. No individual or ideology remains untouched or unadulterated in the city space. Thus, dominant ideologies collapse, giving way to new debates and visibilities (the working woman, the companionate marriage in *Mahanagar* or the contending opinions about the Vietnam War in *Pratidwandi*). Needless to say, this is a two-way process. Being a space for mobility and influx, the city

adapts to the many who make the city their home. Be it in terms of the linguistic transformations or the cultural cross-overs, the cityscape keeps altering and renewing itself. The many-tongued existences, the plurality of life-styles, in its sheer variety and scope, the city takes, absorbs and transforms as much as it gives and alters. At times, the city fails as a translator, and rather becomes a helpless onlooker. This is perhaps best captured in a 1960 film, titled, Devi.

The film is set in nineteenth century rural Bengal with a feudal patriarchal system still in place. The story revolves around the patriarch, Kalikinkar Choudhuri's dream, a wish fulfillment of sorts, where he sees his daughter-in-law, Doyamoyee as the reincarnation of the goddess Kali. An ardent devotee as Choudhuri is, the film delineates the absurd and unusual wish of the patriarch and the consequences of it. On the surface of it, the film seems to be remotely connected to the city and can in no way be called a film that has the city as a major agent. However, on a closer look, the city, nineteenth century Calcutta seems a strong presence in the film translating discourses and ideologies the clash of which keep surfacing in the film. Umaprasad, Doyamoyee's husband and the patriarch's son becomes the connection to Calcutta, the city of possibilities, new ideas and revolution. Umaprasad almost metaphorically represents the city and its new -found ideologies. He brings these ideas to debate with his father, the contest between tradition and rationality, superstition and a scientific temperament are brought to fore through Umaprasad's character who is a product of the new education that the city life has imbibed in him. This contest between the old and the new continues in varied ways through the film with a sad resolution in the impossibility of translating blind faith and superstition into the progressive paradigms that the city nurtures. This is also the failure of the city in disseminating the new ideas and making those available for the many that remain outside its purview. The city as a translating entity fails in this and thus becomes an onlooker at Doyamoyee's tragic end. All that the city stands for – modernity, science, medicine, rationality and progressiveness are invalidated as it were through Doyamayee's life course. However, the presence of the city and its attempts at rescuing Doyamayee and her likes cannot be overlooked in the film. The ideological battle it seems will require many more

pervasive encounters with the city and its ideas for Doyamayee to be rescued. The film leaves us bewildered with haunting questions – did the city reach out enough for accomplishing the task? Was the city prepared to deal with the ensuing crisis? While such questions keep hovering on the viewer's mind the presence of the city looms larger than usual and a film remotely related to the city now seems to be intricately connected to the city, its ideologies, and its modernity.

Conclusion

Tracing the history of urban spaces and their imaginative impact Sherry Simon reminds us of the many connections that have been made between urban space and its power over the imagination in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Artists, creative writers, poets alike have referred again and again to the role of the city in the making of the human imagination and innovation. It seems to me that Ray's cinema is an expression of such imaginative innovations. Though critics like Chidananda Das Gupta, had complained about Ray's inability to address contemporary issues in the first decade of his filmmaking, 'the Calcutta of the burning trams, the communal riots, refugees, unemployment, rising prices and food shortages'[7], yet, to me, Calcutta seems to be a constant presence in Ray's cinema. Not only in the films that comprise the Calcutta trilogy, but even in the Apu films, Calcutta seems to be one of the central points of return. Though, stereotypes like poverty and rural Bengal came to be associated with Ray's films after the success of *Pather Panchali* (1955), yet, in not many of his films is that the focus. Rather Calcutta makes its presence felt in almost all of Ray's films. Films like *Parash Pathar*, *Apur Sansar*, (partly) *Mahanagar*, *Charulata*, *Mahapurush*, *Pratidwandi*, *Seemabaddha Jana Aranya* and *Pikoo* have the city as the canvas. In some others, like *Kanchenjungha* or *Aranyer Din Ratri*, *Nayak*, or *Sonar Kella*, for example, the main characters are from the metropolis, and in works like *Aparajito Devi* and *Teen Kanya* the poignancy of Calcutta is evident.

[7] Chidananda Das Gupta, 'Satyajit Ray: The First Ten Years', in Talking About Films' (New Delhi, 1981), 72.

Often, the connectedness between the city and the village, the rural and the urban seems a recurrent trope in Ray's cinema. In *Aparajito* (The Unvanquished), the second in the classic sequence that is known to the world as the Apu Trilogy, for example. there is a memorable scene to this effect. Apu, just out of school, has arrived in Kolkata to enroll in a college. A newcomer and a stranger to the city, he finds himself in a busy street, a city bustling with life. Apu is still connected to his village world – symbolically represented in the globe that he clutches on to – the globe, an emblem of the world that was gifted to him by his teacher in the village school. As he stops to shelter from the rain he listens to people conversing in alien tongues - Pushto and Chinese. This is Apu's first experience of the city – a many tongued city that brings with it a sense of isolation, alienation, bewilderment and exhilaration amidst its crowded cacophony.

This estrangement and isolation is characteristic of most modern cities. Ray's films provide varied snippets from the life in this many-tongued city. Home to those who grew up there to witness the transformations, to those who migrated for different reasons in different phases of history, the city played important roles. Ray's imaginative camera takes us through the entanglements between the human and the city, all those moments of negotiation and transformation that often leaves us viewers bewildered at the shaping influence of the city on human lives. Characters like Siddhartha and Aarti cannot be imagined without Calcutta that flows and feeds into their identities, 'making new' the old and translating lives to fit into the city. Ray depicts the city and it's various facets with utmost care in his films, be it the lower-middle-class household, the upper-class locality where Siddhartha's sister's boss lives, its prostitute-den, cinema hall where a bomb explodes, its college life and coffee houses, the restaurant by the side of the Ganges, its hippies, its massive public rally seen from the top of a skyscraper, its radical politics and wall posters and graffiti—all these make the city pulsate with enormity and contradictions. Ray's cinematic *oeuvre* captures the translational fabric of the city - the ongoing tensions and the liminal spaces that the city enables in translating prevalent values and creating confrontational and contemplative space of battles, real and imagined, between understandings of tradition and modernity,

stasis and development. The city in Ray's cinematic world becomes this ever renewing space that translates and is translated at the same time. The city ceases to be a well-defined fully formed entity. Rather, it is the becoming of the city that is noteworthy in Ray - the city that comes into being and keeps evolving through negotiating and translating the different domains of its existence.

References

BHATTACHARYA, AMITABHA.1990/1991. 'Satyajit Ray's Calcutta: Friend or Adversary? *India International Centre Quarterly*, 17 (3/4), *The Calcutta Psyche*, 301-313. Accessed online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/23002471.

BISWAS, MOINAK. (Ed.). 2005. *Apu and After: Re-visiting Ray's Cinema*. Calcutta: Seagull Books.

BOSE, BRINDA. 2008. Modernity, Globality, Sexuality, and the City: A Reading of Indian Cinema. *The Global South*, *India in a Global Age,* 2(1). 35-58. Accessed online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40339281.

CHAMBERS, IAIN. 2012. The Translated City. *Translation*, 1. 101-106.

CHAUDHURI, SUPRIYA. 2005. In the City. In Biswas, Moinak (Ed.), *Apu and After*: *Re-visiting Ray's Cinema*. 251-276. Calcutta: Seagull Books.

DAS GUPTA, CHIDANANDA. 1981. Satyajit Ray: The First Ten Years. *Talking About Films*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

GENTZLER, EDWIN. 2017. *Translation and Rewriting in the Age of Post-Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.

RAY, SATYAJIT. 1976. *Our Films Their Films*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan.

RUSHDIE, SALMAN. 1991. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991.* London: Granta Books in association with Penguin Books.

SIMON, SHERRY. 2012. *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory*. London & New York: Routledge.

Films

RAY, SATYAJIT (Dir.) 1963. 'Mahanagar' (lit. The Big City)

RAY, SATYAJIT (Dir.) 1970. 'Pratidwandi' (The Adversary also called Siddhartha and the City)

***

About the Author

Chandrani Chatterjee
Chandrani Chatterjee teaches English Studies at the Department of English, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune.
Email: chandrani[AT]unipune[DOT]ac[DOT]in

Cite this Work:

Chatterjee, Chandrani. 2023. The 'Translated' Cityscape: A Study of Select Satyajit Ray Films. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 63-81.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar4

Investigating the Translation of Arabic Conventional Implicatures into English

EKREMA SHEHAB & ABDUL-RAHMAN QADAN

Abstract

This paper examines the translation of Arabic conventional implicatures into English exemplified with synonymy and terms of address in two genres: religious (Quranic) texts and literary texts. The objective is to explore the conventional implicated meanings in Arabic cognitive synonyms and address terms which pose difficulties to translators. The data of the study consists of 12 excerpts drawn from Arabic source text and their 12 counterpart excerpts from the English translation. In case of conventional implicatures triggered off by synonyms, the study reveals that the translation of these implicatures depends mainly on the purpose behind their contextual use. If they are used to communicate certain implicated meaning as is the case in religious texts, conveying their inner meanings in translation becomes a necessity. For conventional implicatures triggered off by address terms, translators need to pay attention to their multi-dimensional semantics which are determined by the conventional meaning of the expressions uttered. In both cases translators are urged to use communicative and /or formal translation methods in order to emphasize and convey the message intended by the SL text.

Keywords: Translation Studies, Conventional Implicature, Terms of Address, Synonymy, Communicative Translation.

Introduction

In the literature about pragmatics, implicature is defined as a pragmatic inference (any conclusion that one may draw from a sentence or an utterance) that goes well beyond the literal meaning of utterances and thus resides at some level in the context of

utterance. In other words, it is somewhere in the deep structure of the semantic representation of certain utterances. Lyons says that implicature "rests upon a distinction between what is actually said and what is implied (but not entailed) in saying what is said" (1977: 592). He maintains that in any semantic unit or utterance, there are two realities: One is the linguistic reality which is the mere words of it, and the other is what lies behind the language from two perspectives. One perspective is that of the speaker, and the other is that of the addressee. For example, if we take "it is cold in here" (ibid: 593), the linguistic items "it, is, cold, in, and here" constitute one entity and the other entity depends on the context of utterance outside language. Therefore, the linguistic items, the context of utterance and the principle of co-operation can produce the other reality intended here (the heating should be turned up). So, the gap between what is said (linguistic entity) and what is conveyed (not said) is what we call implicature.

Grice (1975) divides implicature into two major types: Conversational implicature and conventional implicature. Conversational implicature, which is not the concern of the present study, is a special kind of pragmatic inference which lies outside the structure of language. It is context-dependent and is derived from general conversational principles or maxims (Simons 2017). In conventional implicature, on the other hand, "the conventional meaning of the words used will determine what is implicated, besides helping to determine what is said. What is conventionally implicated is part of the meaning force of the utterance" (Grice 1975: 6). In other words, this type of implicature arises from conventional features of the words used in an utterance and it includes all non-truth aspects of what is conveyed by an utterance solely due to the words or forms the sentence contains (Huang 2014). It is closely allied to what is said in the strict sense, at least in that the same clause can determine either the truth conditions of a sentence or a set of conventional implicatures. For example, in (1) below, the clause "that Bill is a linguist" enters into the evaluation of the truth of the sentence but in (2) it does not. In Grice's system, example (2) would be considered true in case the proposition "that Bill is a linguist "is surprising regardless of whether that proposition is true or false (Sadock 1978: 282):

1. It is true that Bill is a linguist.
2. It is surprising that Bill is a linguist.

Levinson argues that conventional implicatures are non-truth conditional inferences that are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions (1983: 127). Levinson notes that "Oh" as an initial particle in an utterance conventionally implicates that some news has been received and recognized. This particle, says Levinson, has no propositional content that could be analyzed truth-conditionally. He also notes that a very large number of deictic expressions seem to have conventional implicature as a central meaning component. This, argues Levinson, is true as discourse-deictic items as in (1) and social deictic items as in (2) (when used in address):

1. However, moreover, besides, anyway, well, still, furthermore, although, oh, so
2. Sir, madam, mate, your honor, sonny, hey, oi

Levinson (129) cites two French pronouns "vous" and "tu" as a case in point as these two pronouns do not signal any difference in truth conditions, but they differ in the expressed social relationship between speaker and addressee. For instance, using "vous" to a singular addressee conventionally implicates that "the addressee is socially distant from or socially superior to the speaker."

The present study discusses the translation of two classes of Arabic conventional implicatures into English, namely synonymy and terms of address. It attempts to translate these conventional implicatures in their literary and religious context to show their implicated meanings which are attached to their semantic forms. The study also shows that the meaning of Arabic conventional implicatures is multi-dimensional and it, therefore, should be handled in English translation based on the linguistic meaning of theses expressions in their actual context of use as will be shown below in illustrative examples.

Research Methodology

This descriptive qualitative study explores the translation into English of some Arabic conventional implicatures exemplified with synonyms and terms of address and identified by the authors as posing difficulties to translators of Arabic texts into English. Some of these synonymous expressions and social honorifics are considered in extracts taken from literary and religious texts. Some of the examples are taken from the late Egyptian novelist and Noble Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz's (1947) Zuqaq al-Midaq and translated into English by Le Gassick (1975). Other extracts are taken from the Holy Quran and translated by Arberry (1986). This significant selection of data from two different sources (sacred and literary texts) is intentionally done to serve the purpose of the study; conventional implicatures of Arabic synonyms and terms of address are clearly exhibited when these expressions are used in literary and religious texts; they generate conventional implicated meanings in these text types, which might be challenging to translators.

In synonymous conventional implicatures, we mainly deal with cognitive (collocable) synonyms which encapsulate conventional meanings in their actual context of use. In terms of address, I deal with absolute and relational terms of address whose implicated meanings in their immediate context are conventional. We cite each example in its Arabic context followed by its English translation. For ease of reference, all examples are bold typed in both the Arabic and English texts. In some cases, where the renditions of the aforementioned translators fail to convey the intended implicature, we suggest our own translation of these conventional implicatures in light of their context of use.

Purpose of the Study

Translations from Arabic into English and vice versa are fraught with difficulties and problems. One of the areas where translators may encounter difficulties is that of translating Arabic conventional implicatures into English. Little in-depth research has been done on the topic within the Arabic Translation Studies and the few articles that address Arabic conventional implicatures remain limited. This study, therefore, aims to address the existing gaps in Arabic

conventional implicatures studies and provides in-depth analysis of the translation of two categories generating these implicatures, namely synonymy and terms of address. It describes the different implicated conventional meanings of these implicatures in their literary and religious texts and presents translators with strategies to overcome the problem under discussion. In particular, the study shows how Arabic cognitive synonyms pose difficulties when translated into English and it distinguishes between absolute and relational terms of address and their translation into English.

Furthermore, the assessment of how professional translators (Le Gassick 1975 & Arberry 1986) have translated these conventional implicatures is examined in relation to three translation equivalences: formal (semantic translation), functional, and ideational (communicative translation). In essence, formal equivalence aims to faithfully replicate the form and meaning of the original text as closely as possible (Nida 1964: 159). On the other hand, functional equivalence seeks to find the nearest natural equivalent to the message in the source language (Nida 166). Adding to the formal vs. functional equivalence dichotomy, Farghal (1994) introduces the concept of "ideational equivalence". which focuses on capturing the underlying idea independently of formal and functional constraints. It emphasizes the communicative meaning of an utterance rather than its formal and functional correspondence in the target language.

Limitations of the Study

The primary focus of this study is the translation challenge of Arabic conventional implicatures into English. The purpose of the study is to raise awareness among translators regarding the presence of implied meanings within synonymous expressions and terms of address that can be inferred from their semantic content. Our objective extends beyond providing model translations for the study's data; instead, we believe that addressing the broader issue would be more beneficial in practical terms. Consequently, the collected data is considered a representative sample, which is utilized to highlight the specific problem and primarily serves to illustrate the difficulties involved in translating Arabic conventional implicatures into English.

Arabic Synonyms as a Class of Conventional Implicature

Synonymy has been examined and defined differently by various authors. According to Palmer (1976: 88), synonymy refers to "sameness of meaning." Lyons defines synonymous lexical items as those that possess "the same sense" (1977: 446). However, Lyons also emphasizes that for these items to be truly synonymous, they should be interchangeable within a sentence without altering their conceptual meaning. For instance, in the sentence "we found the boys hiding in the shed". the word "discover" could be substituted with "find" without changing the overall meaning. However, in the sentence "Sir Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin in 1928". "find" cannot be replaced with "discover" (cf. Jackson 1988: 65).

The concept of synonymy has sparked debates among European and Arab linguists. In the English language, two contrasting perspectives on synonymy exist: the strict view and the flexible view. The former categorically denies the existence of synonymy, while the latter asserts that any two words sharing at least one sense can be considered synonymous (Preyer 2018). Similarly, in Arabic, there are two opposing camps of scholars when it comes to the notion of synonymity: those who outright reject it and those who embrace it (cf. Al-Saleh, 1960: 292-301). The proponents of the first camp support their stance by arguing that words sharing at least one common semantic component should be categorized as attributes rather than synonyms.

Accordingly, the lexical items *jawād* (lit. fast horse), *aḍham* (lit. completely black horse) are attributes rather than synonyms of *ḥiṣān* (lit. horse). The second team, however, acknowledges the presence of synonymy and recognizes the subtle distinctions among synonymous lexical items.

A compromise stance is taken by several scholars, including Palmer (1976), Larson (1984), Cruse (1986), and Shunnaq (1992). They acknowledge the presence of synonymy in language, but they also argue against the existence of "real". "identical". "absolute "or" total" synonyms. Cruse (1986), for instance, asserts that absolute synonyms are non-existent, and even if they do exist, they are extremely rare. He further states that "there is no obvious motivation for the existence of absolute synonyms in a language and one would

expect either that one of the items would fail into obsolescence, or that a difference in semantic function would develop" (ibid: 270).

Shunnaq (1992: 24) categorizes synonymy into five levels based on a scale of similarity. The first level corresponds to antonymy, indicating opposite meanings. The second level comprises near-synonyms, which are words that are almost synonymous but not entirely so. Contextual synonyms make up the third level, consisting of two similar lexical items that can be interchangeable in certain contexts. The fourth level, which is the primary focus of this study, involves cognitive synonyms. To qualify as cognitive synonyms, two conditions must be met: they must be syntactically identical (e.g., noun + noun, adj + adj) and preserve truth conditions (Cruse 1986). Edmonds and Hirst (2016) define cognitive synonyms as words that, when substituted within a sentence, maintain their truth conditions but may alter the expressive meaning, style, or register of the sentence. The Arabic synonymous lexical items examined in this study (examples provided below) fall into this category. The final level is absolute synonymy, characterized by two lexical items sharing an exactly identical meaning.

Hummer argues that a more precise distinction between lexical items should be based on evidence from corpora (2014: 148). Analyzing corpus data allows for insights into the degree of synonymy in terms of shared or exclusive contextual conditions, as well as the preferred contexts for each synonym option. Therefore, studying synonyms in real contexts is crucial, as a word's meaning emerges from a combination of its context-independent core meaning and explicit differences compared to its synonyms. Consequently, when selecting the appropriate word for a specific situation, one must carefully consider the distinctions between all available options, aiming to convey the desired implicature while avoiding unintended implications. Achieving an exact translation becomes challenging, as each translation possibility may overlook certain senses or convey undesired meanings. Thus, faithful translation requires a sophisticated process of selecting the most suitable or closest synonym provided by one language for a word in another language, considering the particular context (cf. Edmonds & Hirst 2016). The challenge with cognitive synonyms is that they exhibit a strong "synonymy effect" (cf. Hino et al. 2002) and they

often appear to be absolute, making it difficult to grasp their subtle distinctions in meaning.

Examples and Discussion

Having discussed the problem of synonymy in related theoretical works above, let us examine the problems involved in translating Arabic cognitive synonyms into English. To start with, let us consider the following synonymous pair in their literary context:

1. Mādha yukhabi' lahu al mustaqbal wa mādha yaḍmir lighulāmehi?! Ishtada behi al **qanūṭ** wa ḍā'afa qanūṭuhu mā lāha fī wajhi al mua'llim min al jaza' wa al iṣrār (Zuqaq al Midaq, p.10).

   What could the future hold for him and how could he provide for his son? A feeling of **despair** seized him and increased in intensity when he saw the look of regretful determination on Kirsha's face (Le Gassick's translation, Midaq Alley, p.7)

2. Wa-btuliya bifaqdi al 'abnā' falam yabqā lahu walad 'ala kathrati mā khalafa min al aṭfāl. dhāqa marārati alkhaybati ḥatā 'utri'a qalbuhu **bilya's** (Zuqaq al-Midaq, p12).

   Besides, he had been afflicted with the loss of his children and now none remained, although he had several. He had tasted the bitterness of disappointment so much that his heart almost overflowed with a **despair** that nearly choked him (Le Gassick's translation, Midaq Alley: 8)

The implied conventional meaning of the cognitive synonyms provided in examples 1 and 2 indicates a sense of hopelessness and sadness. Ibn-Manzour (1970), an Arab lexicographer and rhetorician, highlights that the Arabic term *qanūṭ* is employed to denote a state of complete and utter despair, even in relation to positive things. In other words, *qanūṭ* carries a stronger suggestion of hopelessness compared to *ilya's*. Therefore, if a translator aims to stay more faithful to the source language (SL) text, they can utilize ideational equivalence and translate *qanūṭ* as "total or complete despair."

Indeed, it is essential to consider the *skopos* (purpose or intention) of the usage of synonyms with conventional implicated meanings during the translation process, as emphasized by Reiss et al. (2014). According to Cruse (1986), synonyms are employed to elucidate the meaning of another lexical item. Observe the use of "dismiss" below in clarifying the meaning of "cashier":

"He was cashiered, that is to say, dismissed" (ibid: 267).

However, Newmark (1981) discusses additional purposes for employing synonyms. They are utilized to maintain the coherence of the text and prevent repetition. Furthermore, synonyms can occasionally offer supplementary remarks about the subject matter. Consider the following example:

"Palestine is a small country-it is the Holy Land" (ibid: 103).

Synonymy serves another purpose in literary writing by adding aesthetic value and evoking emotions within the text. Consequently, translators should demonstrate flexibility when dealing with synonymous expressions and should not insist on complete congruence between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) when encountering difficulties in finding an exact equivalent term in the TL. Instead, they should first examine the broader context in which the synonymous expressions are used, considering whether they primarily serve the purpose of redundancy, as often observed in political texts (cf. Shunnaq 1992). Since synonyms in Arabic serve various purposes, translators should consider multiple translation options. Specifically, they can choose between formal, functional, and ideational equivalence. When synonymous expressions are employed to convey specific implicated meanings or to enhance the emotive quality of the text, as frequently seen in religious texts in general and the Holy Quran in particular, the translator should, if feasible, opt for communicative translation to convey the conventional implicated meaning of each synonymous expression. Farghal's (1994) concept of Ideational Equivalence can also be valuable in this regard. Farghal suggests that when translators become aware of this type of equivalence, it can broaden their translation choices and help avoid awkward or unnatural

expressions, thereby facilitating the successful rendering of terms like *qanūṭ* as "total or complete despair".

Le Gassick (1975) regards the cognitive synonyms *ilya's* and *qanūṭ* as absolute synonyms and uses "despair" as an equivalent for both terms. In doing so, Le Gassick neutralizes the conventional implicatures of these synonymous expressions, suggesting that he does not perceive a necessity to reflect their implicated conventional meaning in translation within this specific context. It appears that Mahfouz uses the synonymous pair *ilya's* and *qanūṭ* in the given context to avoid repetition and enhance the cohesiveness of the text. Essentially, for stylistic reasons, he avoids repeating the word *qanūṭ*. It is unlikely that Mahfouz intends to convey the conventional meaning of *qanūṭ*; thus Le Gassick's translation of the pair as "despair" is congruent. When translating Arabic cognitive synonyms that generate conventional implicatures, translators should rely on their intuition, considering the situational context (cf. Halliday 1988). Shunnaq (1992: 25) further emphasizes the challenge of translating Arabic cognitive synonyms with conventional implicatures and underscores the importance of intuition in the translation process:

> To translate Arabic cognitive synonyms into English could be misleading because of the slight differences which could not be conveyed through the translation process, i.e. nuances, tones, attitudes, etc. If we insist on complete equivalence for the SL and TL items to be synonymous, there will be no translation in most cases. Therefore, the best criterion would be the intuition of a native Arabic speaker, who is supposed to judge such differences better.

Now, let us delve into the topic of successive or collocable cognitive synonyms. These are pairs of synonymous words in Arabic that often appear together. I want to emphasize from the beginning that such pairs of synonyms are typically employed for the purposes of emphasis, style, and aesthetics, rather than further clarifying the conventional implicated meaning. Their function is to embellish the text and evoke emotions. Usually, the second word in the synonymous pair is introduced to create an engaging rhythm within

the text, which is challenging to replicate in translation. When translating such strings of successive cognitive synonyms, Shunnaq (1992: 27) argues that a direct parallel coupling in translation may be unnecessary and might even appear redundant. As these collocated cognitive synonyms heavily rely on the context in which they are used, translators should initially examine the broader context to determine whether they are employed merely for emphasis and aesthetic purposes or if they convey subtle differences and convey specific implicated meanings. Translators should rely on their intuition to assess whether it is necessary to reflect such differences in their translation. When dealing with these cognitive synonyms, translators often find themselves torn between producing faithful renderings or ensuring the natural flow of the translation in the (TL).

For more clarification, consider the synonymous pair in the following example:

3. Eshtaghala fī bid'i ḥayātihi tamurjiyan liṭabīb 'snān fī al jamāliya fafaqiha fanahu bihathqihi wa bar'a fīh! wa qad ishtahara biwaṣfātihi almufīda wa in kāna yufaḍil alkhal' ghaliban ka'ḥsan 'ilāj wa rubama kāna khal'u alḍirs fī 'yadatihi almutanaqila **'alīman mūji'an**, illā 'anahu rakhīṣ (Zuqaq al-Midaq, p. 8).

Dr. Booshy began his professional life as assistant to a dentist in the Gamaliya district. He learned by observing the dentist's skill and so became proficient himself. He was well known for the effectiveness of his prescriptions, although he generally preferred extraction as the best cure! His roving dental surgery would no doubt have been considered **unbearably painful** were it not for the fact that his fees were so low (Le Gassick's translation, Midaq Alley: 5).

Apparently, the bold-typed Arabic synonymous pair is used in this context for emphasis and to make the meaning more comprehensive. Put differently, in using this pair in this particular context, we do not think that the writer (Mahfouz) wants to communicate to the reader the fine shades of meaning which exist between *'alīman* and *mūji'an* but rather he intends to make his text more emotive. The pair is also used by the writer to stress the meaning and to maintain a rhythmic

beauty, which is exhibited in the use of nunation. Arabic tolerates the use of collocable synonyms more than English and therefore it is not necessary to render a string of synonyms in Arabic into a string of synonyms in English since such a practice may render our translation redundant or even awkward (cf. Shunnaq 1992). Le Gassick's (1975) translation (unbearably painful) reflects the writer's implicated meaning, namely that the process of rooting out a tooth in that inexperienced dentist's clinic is so painful. The difference in meaning between *'alīman* and *mūji'an* is so subtle and there is little information in Arabic books concerning the difference. Ibn Manzour (1970) mentions a clearer account when he says that the word *'alīman* very often collocates with the Arabic word *al'adhab* (lit. torture), while the word *mūji'an* is frequently used with the word *almaraḍ* (lit. illness). According to Ibn Manzour (1970), in Arabic we usually say *al'adhabu mūji'an* (lit. Torture is painful), especially God's painful torture and *almaraḍ 'alīman* (lit. Sickness is painful). We may conclude from this that *'alīman* is stronger than *mūji'an* in suggesting pain. However, I do not think translators should try to reflect such fine shades of meaning in their translation in this particular context. All what they need to do is to reflect the pair's overall implicated meaning by resorting to ideational equivalence. Thus, Le Gassick's (1975) translation "unbearably painful" is congruent.

Sometimes collocated cognitive synonyms are figuratively or metaphorically used. To clarify, witness the example below:

4. marhaban ya zuqaq **alhanā wa 'als'ādah**. Dumta wa dama ahluka al'ajilā' ya lihusni hādha almandhar, wa yā lijamāl hā'ula' alnās. māthā arā?! hādhehi Husniya alfaraneh jālisa 'ala 'atabati alfurun kalzakība 'aynan 'ala al'rghifa wa 'aynan 'ala Ji'dah zawjuha (Zuqaq al-Midaq: 29).

"Hello, street of **bliss**!" Long life to you and all your fine inhabitants. What a pretty view and see how handsome the people are! I can see Husniya, the bakeress, sitting like a big sack before the oven with one eye on the loaves and one on Jaada, her husband (Le Gassick's Translation, Midaq Alley: 23).

The synonymous pair *'als'ādah and alhanā* are used in the above extract to describe the miserable "Midaq Alley" in Cairo. Here the writer does not really mean that this poor side street in Cairo which consists of a few shops and homes is flourishing but he is in fact being ironic and sarcastic by saying that about Midaq Alley. In such cases, translators face a double-edged problem. They have first to figure out the pair's conventional implicature and then decide on whether to retain that metaphoric, ironic meaning in their translation (Shehab 2016). Ibn Manzour (1970) maintains that the word *alhanā* in Arabic has to do with the psychological feeling of the person and it lasts longer than*'als'ādah*. Moreover, *alhanā* is something one receives without doing any hard work or exerting any effort. As for *'als'ādah,* Ibn Manzour says, it is limited and is usually felt when one's needs are met or his wishes are achieved. It might not be easy to find a word in English which can be used to reflect the implicated meaning of *alhanā.* In this case, a translator should manage the situation and use his/her common sense in order to come up with a word that may be deemed a reasonable rendering of *alhanā*. As for Le Gassick (1975), he uses only the word "bliss" as an equivalent for both *'als'ādah* and *alhanā.* Apparently, the use of *'als'ādah* and *alhanā* in our context is meant to emphasize the great happiness Midaq Alley enjoys (ironically speaking) and we may not need to use two different words in English to gloss the meaning of the synonymous pair. Hence Le Gassick's (1975) "bliss" is a reasonable rendering of these collocable synonyms. However, my intuition tells me that using a parallel coupling in this particular context such as "bliss and happiness" does not seem redundant and it sounds natural in English. I have to mention also that Le Gassick's rendering should be praised because he encloses his translation within inverted commas and uses an exclamation mark to alert the reader that an ironic meaning is intended by the writer. Newmark (1988) argues that it is quite preferable, when translating ironical utterances, to use inverted commas and/or an exclamation mark in order to alert the readership. Accordingly, *'als'ādah* and *alhanā* could be best translated into something like "bliss and happiness!"

To shed more light on the translation of collocable synonyms, let us consider the following synonymous pair:

5. fakfaharra wajh ‘alshā’er wa dhakara maḥsūran ‘ana qahwat “karsha” ākhir mā tabaqā lahu min alqahwat ‘aw min ‘asbab alrizq fī dunyāh, ba’da jāhin ‘arīd qadīm. wa bil’amsi alqarīb istaghnat ‘anhu kadhalik qahwat alqal’a. Umr ṭawīl wa rizqun munqati’ famādha yaf’al bihayāteh?! wa mā jadwa talqīn ebnuhu albā’s hādha alfan wa qad **bāra wa kasada** (Zuqaq al-Midaq: 9).

   The old man’s face clouded and he remembered sadly that Kirsha’s cafe was the only one left to him and, indeed, his last source of livelihood and one which had served him well. Only the day before, the Castle cafe had sent him away. Old as he was, and now with his living cut off, what was he to do with his life? What was the point of teaching his poor son this profession when it **had died like this**? (Le Gassick’s translation, Midaq Alley: 6).

Ibn Mazour (1970) mentions that the word *kasada* is used in Arabic when we find no market for merchandise. That is to say, the products are available but they sell badly. The word *bāra*, he maintains, has to do with a dead stock or trade which has become unprofitable and hence ceased to exist. It is clear from our context that the writer wants to emphasize that the art of saying poetry ceased to have currency among the people of Midaq Alley; listening to a radio replaced listening to poets. The writer could have used only the word *kasada* to reflect this implicated meaning, but he injected the word *bāra* into the text to emphasize the meaning and make it more emotive. I do not think there is a need for translators in this context to maintain the subtle differences which exist between *kasada* wa *bāra* in their translation. They should worry about the writer’s overall intended implication and reflect it in their rendering resorting to ideational equivalence. Le Gassick’s (1975) acceptable ideational translation below indicates that he realizes the writer’s intended meaning:

It had died like this.

However, other suggested equivalents would be something like the following:

This art is no longer alive and kicking.

This art had become useless and futile.

We turn now to synonymous words in Quranic texts. Consider examples 6 and 7 below:

6. allāhu aladhī yūrsilu ***alriyāḥ*** fatuthīru sahāban fa yabsutuhu fī ‘alsamā’ kaifa yashā’u wa yaj’aluhū kisafan fatarā lwadqa yakhruju min khilālihī fa idhā aṣāba bihī man yashā’u min ‘ibādihī idha hum yastabshirūn (Surah 48, Ar-Rum)

Allah is He Who sendeth the **winds** so that they raise a cloud and then spreadeth it along the heaven as He will and breaketh it intofragments, and thou beholdest the rain come forth from the intestines thereof (Arberry’s (1986) translation, Surah 48, Ar-Rūm).

7. wa ammā ‘ādun fa ‘uhlikū bi ***rīḥin*** ṣarṣarin ‘ātiyah (Al-Haqqah, Surah 6).

And as for A’ad, they were destroyed by **a wind**, furious, roaring (Arberry’s translation, Surah 6, Al-Haqqah).

Although the synonymous pair *alriyāḥ* (lit. winds) and *alrīḥ* (lit. a wind) are not absolute synonyms, we have observed that Arberry (1986) translates them into “winds” and “a wind “, respectively. Arbarry’s indequate translation fails to convey the intended implicatures encapsulated in the two synonymous lexical items. In a non-religious context, using “winds” as an equivalent to *alriyāḥ* or *alrīḥ is* acceptable as both words have almost the same sense in both Arabic and English. Their conventional implicature in Arabic and English is about winds that move or stir up the clouds and send down rain. However, since we are dealing with a Quranic text where slight differences of lexical items do count, it could be more faithful if we translate *alriyāh* ideationally into something like “blessed winds”. “Blessed” is added to the translation because the conventional implicature here is that these winds are needed for having rain. The other synonymous word *alrīḥ* is used in Quranic texts to conventionally implicate torment and destruction. This implicated meaning should be reflected in a sacred text like the Holy Quran. Consequently, it can be translated ideationally as “fierce, deadly wind” or functionally as “gale”.

Quranic synonymous verbs can also be problematic for translators when used in a Quranic text. Witness the following example:

8. fakaifa idhā aṣābathum muṣībatun bimā qaddamat ʻaydīhim thumma jā'ūka ***yahlifūna*** billāhi in aradnā ʻillā ʻihsānan wa tawfīqā (Surah 62, An-Nisa).

How then, when some ill befalleth them because of that which their hands have sent forth and then they come to thee ***swearing by Allah***: we meant naught save kindness and concord (Arberry's translation, Surah 62, An-Nisa).

9. ʻahā'ulā'il ladhīna ***aqsamtum*** lā yanāluhum Allāhu birahmah; ʻudkhulū al Jannata lā khawfun ʻalykum wa lā ʻantum tahzanūn (Surah 49, Al-A'raf).

Are these the ones of whom ye ***swear*** that Allah would not reach them with His mercy? Unto them it hath been said enter the Garden; on you shall come no fear nor shall ye grieve (Arberry's translation, Surah, 49, Al-A'raf).

Arberry (1986) wrongly uses the verb "swear" as an equivalent to the synonymous pair *aqsamtum* (lit. You swore) and *yahlifūna* (lit. They swore). In all contexts in the Holy Quran and as it is evident in the above context, *yahlifūna* generates a conventional implicature of breaking the oath and it is usually ascribed to hypocrites who usually swear with the intention of breaking their promise. *Aqsamtum*, on the other hand, conventionally implicates honest, sincere oaths which are not broken. Thus, such a difference should be accounted for if we choose to be faithful to our translation. Since there is no correspondence in English to capture this subtle difference between the two synonymous pair, we may resort to ideational equivalence as an outlet. Hence, the two verbs can be translated into something like "they untruthfully swear" for *yahlifūna* and "you truthfully swore" for *aqsamtum*.

Before concluding this section, we would like to provide a brief overview of the challenges that arise when translating English cognitive synonyms into Arabic. It is worth mentioning that the difficulties faced by translators when rendering Arabic synonyms into English are, to some extent, similar to those encountered when

translating English synonyms into Arabic. This can be attributed, in part, to the presence of the "synonymy effect" regardless of whether the synonymous pair is in Arabic or English. However, unlike Arabic, English may offer a clearer distinction between the subtle differences among the members of a synonymous pair. So, the main challenge in translating English cognitive synonyms into Arabic lies not in discerning the shades of meaning between them, but rather in finding suitable equivalents in Arabic. Unlike English, Arabic tends to employ an abundance of synonyms, as noted by the Arab rhetorician Al-Suyūty, who mentions numerous synonyms for specific words such as "the sword" and "honey." This suggests the existence of what can be referred to as "extended" cognitive synonyms in Arabic. When it comes to translation, many translators may struggle to capture the slight distinctions that may exist among these extended cognitive synonyms. Consequently, some translators may opt to provide the conceptual, denotative meaning of the synonymous words in their translation, which can result in incongruity, particularly in literary and religious texts. Additionally, when translating English successive synonyms into Arabic, it is important for translators to retain the word-strings involving two or more synonyms in the Arabic translation. Ideally, a parallel coupling in translation can be employed to preserve the aesthetic value of the original text. It is noteworthy that Arabic offers a wide array of synonyms, allowing translators to have multiple options to choose from. However, when translating from Arabic to English, the situation is different. In most cases, translators are not encouraged to maintain word-strings involving multiple synonyms in the English translation. In fact, a parallel coupling in English "may be unnecessary and may even look redundant" (Shunnaq 1992: 27). Shunnaq also emphasizes that in such cases of synonym proliferation, the two or three constituents collectively convey the overall meaning. Therefore, translators should focus on grasping the intended implied meaning that the writer aims to convey when using successive cognitive synonyms and strive to convey that specific meaning in their translation.

Arabic Address Terms as a Class of Conventional Implicature

Terms of address are "words and phrases used for addressing" (Braun 1988: 7). They are words attached to the person to show his/her status, position, and/or rank in society. The use of these terms is "governed by the relationship between two participants the speaker and the hearer" Nevala (2004: 25). Moreover, the speaker's option for using a certain term of address instead of another is highly predictable from three parameters: speaker-addressee social status, the type of relationship that holds between participants in a speech event and the level of formality imposed by the situation (cf. Potts 2005).

Interestingly, terms of address are studied in light of their linguistic, social and cultural function. Levinson (1983: 63) states that "in many languages, distinctions of fine gradation between the relative ranks of speaker and addressee are systematically encoded throughout… [such terms]".

Therefore, these terms have a significant role in any language, for they show different levels of relations, relations that might be marked with familiarity, politeness, formality, superiority, intimacy, etc. Terms of address "have been viewed mainly in terms of power and solidarity". Power involves relations like "older than", "parent of", employer of", "richer than", "stronger than", "nobler than", etc, and solidarity involves relations as "attend the same school", "have the same parents", "practise the same profession" etc. (Brown 2011: 10). Thus, these two parameters determine the choice between familiar and respectful terms of address in language. For instance, the choice between the first name *John* and the family name with the social honorific *Mr. Brown* when addressing or referring to the same individual is a matter of power and solidarity (Brown 2011). The more equal and intimate the speaker is to him, the more he/she would call him John and the less equal and more distant he/she is to him, the more he/she would call him Mr. Brown. Therefore, the choice between first name and honorificized family name operationally depends on the type of social relationship between the speaker and addressee or referent. Likewise, the tu/vous distinction (cf. Levinson 1983) in French has direct bearings on the power-solidarity parameter. Levinson explains that the use of plural "vous"

to address one individual conventionally implicates the power of the addressee, i.e. the addressee is socially superior to the speaker, while the choice of "tu" minimizes the power of the addressee and at the same time promotes intimacy and solidarity between speaker and addressee. Thus, the more intimate the speaker is to the addressee, the more he/she would opt for using familiar term(s) of address, and the more distant he/she is to him, the more he/she would opt for using respectful ones.

It is important to note that terms of address come under two types: absolute and relational (Levinson 1983). Absolute terms are "forms reserved for authorized speakers and authorized recipients" (ibid: 90). So, in absolute usages, the addressee earns the right to receive one title of address over another. In other words, a term of address is issued in light of real present qualities assigned to the addressee (at the time of speaking). Accordingly, in Arabic, *duktūr* (lit. doctor) is absolutely used (in Levinson's sense) provided that the addressee has a PhD or a medical doctor.

On the other hand, relational terms of address are not used to mark the real present qualities ascribed to the addressee, but rather, they are used merely for social purposes. More importantly, relational terms of address have drifted from their denotational signification and acquired a new connotational usage, which is initiated for social purposes. For example, in Arabic, the use of the term *'ustādh* (lit. professor) by, say, waiters or salesmen to customers, as an expression of respect is relational, whereas the use of the same term by a student to his/her teacher in a school is absolute. Hence, relational terms of address are more difficult to translate than absolute ones since they drift from their traditional usages by acquiring new conventional implicatures and their content cannot be understood from their literal meanings. Once these implicatures are determined in a certain context, they become fixed and unchanged (i.e. conventional) as will be clarified below in ample examples.

Examples and Discussion

In examples 10 and 11 below, three informal honorifics *'ustādh* (lit. professor), *mu'allim* (lit. teacher), and *si-ssayyid* (lit. sir) are used:

10. thumma wamaḍat ‘aynahu albaraqatān baghtatan wa ṣāḥ:

alwaqār ‘anfas ‘āha!

fas’alahu alrajulu mutaḥayiran:

mādha ta’ni ya ***‘ustādh***?!

fankafa’a wajhu Zeita ghaḍaban wa ṣāḥa behi muhtaddan:

***‘ustādh*?** ‘asami’tani ‘aqra’u ‘ala alqubūr (Zuqaq al- Midaq:128).

After a while he suddenly blinked his eyes and shouted,

“Dignity is the most precious type of deformity there is!”

“What do you mean, **reverend Sir**?” asked the old man, somewhat perplexed.

Zeita’s face clouded with anger as he shouted,

“**Reverend Sir!** Have you ever heard me reciting at burials?” (Le Gassick’s translation, Midaq Alley: 120).

11. qad qara’a ‘assayyid alḥusainy fī ‘aynayhi nisf almughmaḍatayn alṭam’nīnah faqāla lahu bihudū’ mubtasiman:

sharrafit dārna ya **mu’allim**

farafa’a almu’alim yadayhi ‘ila ‘amāmatihi wa qal:

sharrafa Allahu qadaruqa ya **si-ssayyid** (Zuqaq al-Midaq: 96).

Hussainy read what was in the man’s half-shut eyes, and, filled with quiet selfassurance, he politely commenced:

“You have honored our house with your presence, **Mr. Kirsha.”**

The cafe owner raised his hands to his turban in salutation and said:

“May God reward you for your goodness, **Mr. Hussainy”** (Le Gassick’s translation, Midaq Alley: 85).

Whereas *‘ustādh* in example 10 above is relationally used (again in Levinson’s sense) for it does not denote its traditional usage, *mu’allim* is absolutely used where the speaker addresses an owner of a café house (called Kirsha) to show respect, politeness and

superiority of the addressee. The term *mu'allim* in Egyptian Arabic is usually used to address a foreman, a driver, a work supervisor, a chief of workers, etc. The term *'ustādh* can be used in Arabic to address a person who is superior to the speaker. Thus, the two terms, more often than not, conventionally implicate the superiority of the addressee and the relative inferiority of the speaker.

It should be noted that the term *mu'allim* occurs many times throughout the novel. Le Gassick (1975) adopts three strategies in his attempt to convey this title in English. He resorts to paraphrasing it into (Café owner), using a conventional title of address (Mr.) which can be used for any person irrespective of his/her job, and skipping it. Such inconsistency in the translation of the same form of address obliges us to examine its context as it might be acceptable to have all these translations in different contexts and for variation purposes e.g., stylistic reasons. In his rendering of *mu'allim* in example 11 above, Le Gassick (1975) opts for the second strategy, i.e., he provides a formal and conventional title of address (Mr. Kirsha). By so doing, Le Gassick does not reflect the intimate relationship that holds between the speaker and addressee, for "Mr." plus a proper name marks a formal and distant relationship in English and does not necessarily show that there is a personal relation holding between the speaker and the addressee. However, the term *mu'allim,* which refers to (Kirsha), who is the manager of a café house and supervises the workmen in it, can be best translated into "boss".

As for the term *'ustādh,* the analysis of the data demonstrates that Le Gassick seems to be aware of the fact that the term is not used in its traditional, absolute sense since he translates it into Reverend Sir. The use of "reverend" by Le Gassick is meant to highlight the speaker's polite attitude toward the addressee as well as his deference. Parkinson (1985:131) says that there are three typical uses of the term *'ustādh* in Egyptian Arabic. The first usage "involves the use of any high term to attack an addressee who does not deserve to receive it". Hence sarcasm arises. The second usage, however, involves the name calling mode, as opposed to the strict vocative mode. In the vocative mode, Parkinson argues, the term *'ustādh* has some pragmatic discourse function such as getting

attention, making turn changes, indicating who the addressee is, etc. In the name-calling mode, no such pragmatic functions exist. The term is only used to imply that the addressee has the qualities associated with the word; that is, the term is used in the name calling mode whenever the speaker thinks that the addressee is doing something masterly. For example, *'ustādh* can be used to address a Sheikh (old religious man) who recites the Quran masterly. Finally, the third usage is meant for secondary and elementary school teachers. In Levinson's (1983) system, the first two usages are relational, whereas the last (third) one is absolute.

We can argue that *'ustādh* can be best translated into "past master", since the addressee (called Zaita) is a past master at his job (deforming people by cutting their limbs). However, I should add that *'ustādh* as a relational term of address may furnish a possible ironical interpretation. Going back to our context above, one can assume that the speaker (a man seeking to deform his body in order to be able to work as a beggar) is being ironic by relaying an impolite illocutionary act (insulting) in a seemingly polite way. This is what Leech (1983) calls being offensive in an apparently friendly way; the speaker uses a high term *'ustādh* to attack the addressee (Zaita) who does not deserve to receive it. That is why the addressee in our example above becomes angry for being called *'ustādh*.

Likewise, the honorific term *si-ssayyid* in example 11 above is hard to render because of the title of respect *si,* which might be a short form of *sayyid*. It is important to note that the second part of the term (i.e. *sayyid*) might be ambiguous when it is used alone as a title of address. It might be understood as a name of a person, thus referring to a low-class addressee or as a title of address meaning "Lord or Sir", thus referring to a male addressee who is superior to the speaker or to one who is generally equal to the addressor. The title of address *si-ssayyid* conventionally implies different implicatures depending on its context. It could refer to a man who is the head of a family or group, or to a respected and experienced senior man in a family. Sometimes it is used by a wife when addressing her husband. The term in our example merits the second interpretation since it is used as a title of address to refer politely to a respected senior man in the novel (called Radwan Al-Hussainy).

In the analysis of the data, Le Gassick, throughout the novel, uses different translations for the term. He uses "Mister" but in English, the use of "Mr." alone as a title of address shows offence towards the addressee and does not reflect the intimate relationship that holds between speaker and addressee. To quote Parkinson (1985: 157) "it appears that a translator would often be ill-advised to translate English "Mr." into "Sayyid" in Egypt, unless the goal is to offend the addressee". Le Gassick also uses the addressee's family name prefixed by the title "Mr." (Mr. Hussainy). This translation deprives the SL text from its informality. However, based on the conventional usages of the term in Egypt, an appropriate rendering of the term could be something like "Patriarch Si-Ssayyid", or "House Master".

Other titles of address which present much difficulty in translation for Le Gassick are *u'stah* and *'afandī* as in example 12 below:

12. qad sa'lnaha yawman a'n alshāb alladhī ra'aynahu ma'ahā faqālat:

khaṭībī …ṣāḥib ṣalūn ḥilāqah!

wa qālat linafsiha 'anna 'ayyat waḥidatun minhunna latu'idu nafsaha sa'īdatan 'idha khatabahā ṣabi qahwah a'w ḥaddād wa hādha ṣāḥib dukkan ***u'stah*** wa ***'afandī*** 'ayḍan (Zuqaq al-Midaq, p.108).

One day they asked her about the young man "whom they had seen with her" and she had replied:

"He is my fiancé…. He owns a barbershop!"

She asked herself which one of them would not consider herself lucky to become engaged to a cafe waiter or blacksmith's apprentice. Indeed, he was the owner of a shop, definitely ***middle-class***. Moreover, ***he wore a suit*** (Le Gassick's translation, Midaq Alley: 98).

These two terms *u'stah* and *'afandī* do not lend themselves readily for adequate English translation, for they have no direct equivalents in English. The term *u'stah* is borrowed from Persian language and it is a colloquial term for*'ustādh*; it is used in Arabic as a title for some artificers and could mean master; foreman; overseer; it is also

a form of address for those in lower callings, e.g., to a cab driver, coachman, etc. Parkinson (1985: 141) says that *'ustādh* means "master" (in the master/apprentice relationship) and refers specifically to those professions related to some craft or mechanical (usually hand) skill. In our example, the term refers to a hairdresser and the speaker is proud and boasts that the addressee (her fiancé) is a hairdresser. In terms of translation, Le Gassick's rendering shows that he misreads the term and provides a nonsense translation, which reads as "middle-class". However, the term *u'stah* can be translated into "a craftsman".

Unlike *u'stah,* which is used in absolute sense in our example, *'afandī is* used relationally to designate the speaker's social rank and position. This term means gentleman when referring to non-Europeans wearing western clothes and tarboosh. It is also used nowadays in military jargon to refer to officials whose ranks are either a "first lieutenant "or "second lieutenant". Such traditional usage is not applied in our example because address forms are always "culturally dependent and change in the course of time as old criteria become obsolete and come to be replaced by new criteria" (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2003: 4). So, the term *'afandi* is used to conventionally implicate the addressee's respectable position and/or rank. Le Gassick (1975) renders what the term means according to his own understanding into "he must wear a suit", which is awkward in English. A good translation of this term might be "Effendi", which implicates the addressee's good social standing.

Conclusion

The study has shown that synonymy and terms of address in Arabic give rise to conventional implicature since they have conventional meanings in their different religious and literary contexts and these meanings are derived from their semantic form. In the case of synonymy, we have seen, for example, that *alriyāh* and *alrīh* in their Quranic context always conventionally implicate "blessed winds" and "fierce, deadly wind", respectively. More often than not, translators use formal equivalence in their translation of conventional implicatures in religious texts and thus they fail to

convey the synonyms' implicated conventional meanings which should be reflected in the translation of sacred texts. Translators seem to be inclined to preserve the aesthetic value of the original and attempt to be accurate by being more faithful to the SL text, but by so doing they distort the intended meaning. Translators must be mindful of the intention behind the use of synonyms in a given context. If synonyms are employed to convey specific implied meanings, particularly in literary works and religious texts, translators should prioritize ideational equivalence over formal equivalence. This has been demonstrated in the ideational translation of *'līman* and *mūji'an into* "unbearably painful" as well as the rendering of *yahlifūna* and *aqsamtum* into "They untruthfully swore" and "They truthfully swore", respectively.

When dealing with Arabic address terms, translators need to distinguish between two types of usages: absolute and relational. It is important for translators to understand that relational terms of address are used primarily for social purposes, undergo pragmatic shifts in their meaning and have their own fluctuating relational usages. We have noticed that the term *"ustādh"* in our data conventionally implicates "past master" rather than "professor". which is its absolute conventional implicature.

References

AL-SALEH, SUBHI. 1960. *Dirasat fi Fiqh Allughah*. Beirut: Dar Al-Ilim Lilmalayeen.

AL-SUYUTY, JALALADIN.1986. *Al-Muzhir Fi U'loom Al-Lugha'*. Beirut: Al-Asriya Library.

ARBERRY, ALI. 1986. *The Koran Interpreted*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall and IBD.

BRAUN, FRIEDERIKE. 1988. *Terms of Address: Problems of Patterns and Usage in Various Languages and Cultures*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

BROWN, LEVENSON. 2011. *Korean Honorifics and Politeness in Second Language Learning*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

CRUSE, ALLAN. 1986. *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

EDMONDS, PHILIP & GRAEME, HIRST. 2016. Near-synonymy and Lexical Choice. *Computational Linguistics* 28. 105-144.

FARGHAL, MOHAMMAD. 1994. Ideational Equivalence in Translation. In Beaugrande Robert, Abdullah Shunnaq and Mohammad Heliel (Eds.), *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and Middle East.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.

GRICE, PAUL. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In Peter, Cole and Jerry, Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and Semantics 3,* Speech Acts.41-58. New York: Academic Press.

HALLIDAY, MICHAEL & HASAN, RUQAIYA. 1998. *Language, Context, and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HINO, YASUSHI, STEPHEN LUPKER, AND PEXMAN, PENNY. 2002. Ambiguity and Synonymy Effects in Lexical Decision, Naming, and Semantic Categorization Tasks: Interactions between Orthography, Phonology, and Semantics. *Journal of Experimental Psychology Learning Memory and Cognition* 28 (4). 686-713.

HUANG, YAN. 2014. *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HUMMER, CHRISTIANE. 2014. A Corpus Based Approach to Near Synonymy of German Multi-Word Expressions. *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akade Mie Der Wissenschaften, Jagerstr* 22/23. 142-149.

IBN-MANZOUR. MOHAMMAD. 1970. *Lisan Al-Arab*. Cairo: Al-Risalah Institution.

JACKSON, HOWARD. 1988. *Words and Their Meaning*. London: Longman Group.

LEECH, GEOFFREY. 1983. *The Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman Group.

LEVINSON, STEVEN. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

LYONS, JOHN. 1977. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

MAHFOUZ, NAGUIB. 1947. *Zuqāq-Al-Midaq*. Cairo: The Library of Egypt. Translated by Trevor Le Gassick 1975 as *Midaq Alley*. London: Heinemann.

NEVALA, MINNA. 2004. Accessing Politeness Axes: Forms of Address and Terms of Reference in Early English Correspondence. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36. 2125- 2160.

NEWMARK, PETER. 1981. *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

NEWMARK, PETER. 1988. *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.

NIDA, EUGENE. 1964. *Toward a Science of Translation*. Leiden: Brill.

PALMER, FIRTH. 1976. *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PARKINSON, DILWORTH. 1985 *Constructing the Social Context of Communication: Terms of Address in Egyptian Arabic*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

POTTS, CHRISTOPHER. 2005. *The Logic of Conventional Implicature.* Oxford: Oxford University
Press. doi: 10.1093/Acprof: Oso/9780199273829.001.0001.

PREYER, GERHARD. (Ed.). 2018. *Beyond Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University
Press. doi:10.1093/Oso/9780198791492.001.0001.

REISS, KATHARINA AND VERMEER HANS. 2014. *Towards a General Theory of a Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained*. London: Routledge.

SADOCK, JERROLD. 1978. *On Testing for Conversational Implicature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

SHEHAB, EKREMA. 2016. Pragmatic Failure in Translating Arabic Implicature into English. *Babel* 62 (1). 21-38.

SHUNNAQ, ABDULLAH. 1992. Functional Repetition in Arabic Realized through the Use of Word-Strings with Reference to Arabic- English Translation of Political Discourse. *Nouveltes De La Fit-Newsletter* 1(2). 5-39.

SIMONS, MANDY. 2017. Local Pragmaticsina Gricean Framework. *Inquiry*, 60(5). 466–492. doi:10.1080/0020174X.2016. 1246865.

TAAVITSAINEN, IRMA. & JUCKER, ANDREAS. (Eds.). 2003. *Diachronic Perspectives on Address Term Systems.*1-25. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.

***

Transliteration table

UNGEGN

b	=	ب	ṭ	=	ط
t	=	ت	ẓ	=	ظ
th	=	ث	‘	=	ع
j	=	ج	gh	=	غ
ḥ	=	ح	f	=	ف
kh	=	خ	q	=	ق
d	=	د	k	=	ك
dh	=	ذ	l	=	ل
r	=	ر	m	=	م
z	=	ز	n	=	ن
s	=	س	h	=	ه
sh	=	ش	w	=	و
ṣ	=	ص			
ḍ = ض			y	=	ي
‘= ء					
long vowel a			ā		
long vowel i			ī		
long vowel u			ū		

About the Authors

Ekrema Shehab
Ekrema Shehab is an Associate Professor of Translation Studies at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
Email: ikrimas[AT]yahoo[DOT]com

Abdul-Rahman Qadan
Abdul-Rahman Qadan is a senior lecturer of Linguistics at the Department of English at An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
Email: mr_qadan[AT]yahoo[DOT]com

Cite this Work:

Shehab, Ekrema & Qadan, Abdul-Rahman. 2023. Investigating the Translation of Arabic Conventional Implicatures into English. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 83-109.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar5

The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu Context

ELIGEDI RAJKUMAR

Abstract

This paper studies the role of intermediary agencies in translating global feminist knowledge into the Telugu[1] context. Identifying translators, organisations, publishing houses and magazines as such agencies, it offers an analysis of the function of this feminist thought. The study discusses the ideologies of agents in using translation as a political instrument to construct feminist discourse in the Telugu context. While demonstrating how translation was used as a transmitter for the circulation of feminist ideas, it gauges the influence of global feminist thinking on Telugu feminist translators, writers and activists. It also throws light on the opposition met in translating feminist ideas into Telugu, intellectual efforts and the resistance provided by the feminist translators, writers, activists and publishers as agents of social change to make feminist translation work relevant in the Telugu context.

Keywords: Feminist Translation; Ideology; Travelling Theory; Agency; Telugu Context.

Introduction

The interdisciplinary approach has gained ground in recent years. In the 1990s, Translation Studies attempted to focus on the question of gender as an interdisciplinary area of research. The gender debate began in Translation Studies with Sherry Simon's *Gender in Translation* (1996) and Luise von Flotow's *Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories* (1991) and *Translation and*

[1] Telugu is an Indian language spoken majorly in the Indian states of Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.

Gender (1997). Simon's study (1996) traces the impact of feminism as a literary and political movement on translation theory and practice. The research of Luise (1991) is a critique of feminist translation theories; supplementing, prefacing, footnoting, and hijacking, etc. It inspired new research in the field of translation and gender. Luise's *Translation and Gender* (1997) is a comprehensive study of the intersections between translation and gender. It shows a new direction in the field of feminist translation through a critique of patriarchal language, the impact of feminist writing on interventionist translation practice, and an analysis on the need for recovery of 'lost' women translators. Castro and Andrews (2009) trace the role of the Canadian school of feminist translation in initiating an ideological debate. Castro and Ergun (2017) demonstrate feminist translation as a transnational perspective developed in various geohistorical and sociocultural contexts through feminist activism. Their study also shows feminist translation as travelling theory that contributes to the transnational feminist knowledge.

This article discusses the encounters of feminism as a travelling concept journeying from various linguistic contexts to Telugu linguistic context. Without the movement of ideas from one place to another and one language to another, no changes in thought or innovations could have occurred in the history of humankind. Translation is no longer seen as a simple medium to transfer the meaning of texts from one language to another. In the past two decades, the idea of translation has moved away from a linguistic oriented translation to descriptive translation studies. The study of translation is understood as a social, political and cultural space influenced by the social and political movements and ideologies. Women's movement is one of the major influences. Translation, thus, has become a space for cultural, political and gender debate.

Edward Said discussed the idea of travelling theory for the first time in his essay "Traveling Theory". Said argues that like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel—from person to person, from situation to situation, and from one period to another (1983: 226). Hala Kamal, in her essay also argues that feminism as a theory has originated in different parts of the world and has

travelled in various directions – including its journeys across history and geography in the Egyptian context (2018:136). Min Dongchao (2007) discussed feminism as a travelling concept and looked at the process of translation as a dialogue (duihua) and negotiation between different languages and cultures where the self or one culture encounters and interacts with an "other" culture. The study of Kathy Davis & Mary Evans (2016) also theorised feminism as travelling theory through global conversations. Kathy Davis in her study (2007) explored the travelling of O*ur Bodies, Ourselves* across the world through multiple translations into various languages. Thus, many scholars worked on travelling of feminism from one socio-political context to another context through translation. There is an interaction and exchange between translation and feminist studies due to the global feminist conversations.

The study of Hala (2018) traces the history of 'feminism' and 'gender' as travelling concepts and transnational ideologies in the Egyptian context. The research of Luise & Hala (2021) is a comprehensive study of translation, feminism and gender that covered feminist translation work from 20 countries. It shows feminist translation as a transnational approach through its engagement with the feminist work of Western and non-Western countries. Thus, Simon, Luise, Hala and others and their work played an important role in initiating an ideological thinking. Many scholars (Chamberlain 1998; Tymoczko 2000; Bertacco 2003; Hamerlain 2005; Castro & Andrews 2009; Hala 2018; Reimondez 2009; Castro & Ergun 2017; Luise & Hala 2021) contributed to the debate in feminist translation studies. Few scholars worked on feminist translation in Indian context (Spivak 1993; Niranjana 1998; Devika 2008; Kamala 2010; Tharakeshwar & Usha 2010). In light of these studies, this article aims to discuss the role of intermediary agencies in the construction of the feminist discourse in the Telugu literary context. The ideologies of feminist translators, organisations, publishers and magazines become significant for this study as it is the ideological interest of these agents that drives or motivates them to translate the feminist texts. The present research studies the role of these various agents in translating feminist thought into Telugu.

Feminism in Telugu Context

Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken majorly in the state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India. It is the fourth most spoken language in India after Hindi, Bengali and Marathi. There are currently 75 million Telugu speakers in India. There are many Telugu writers who raised women's issues. Feminism in Telugu literature had taken strong roots since the 1920s when Chalam began writing for gender equality and for the liberation of women from oppressive male dominated society. Telugu political parties[2] are not interested in the question of feminism and feminist understanding of the world. However, many women activists understood the significance of feminist theory through their readings in English. The declaration of International Women's Year (1975) and International Women's Decade (1975-85) gave impetus to the feminist activism in Telugu public sphere. Many autonomous women's organisations[3] were formed from these experiences in 1970s and 1980s. Hence, the current research focused on the translated literature published post 1970s as it gave a theoretical foundation for feminist thinking in the Telugu context. "Until the 1980s, there was little writing in Telugu from a feminist perspective, and women lacked an ideological framework to articulate a political stance since the concept of 'feminism' was deemed unacceptable and the term itself was used as an offensive expression throughout the 1970s and 80s in the Telugu public sphere" (Eligedi 2020: 22). Women activists were not treated with respect by the leaders of the leftist organisations. Women were not treated with respect, as the leadership of the organisations was under the control of men. There was 'male domination' in these organisations. Women's questions were ignored. The decision making power was with male leadership. Women did not play any significant role in the decision making process of the organisations. In an interview to The Hindu, Volga describes how the usage of the word 'male domination' was banned

[2] Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP), Telugu Desam Party (TDP)

[3] Progressive Organisation for women (1974), Stree Shakti Sanghatana (1977), Stri Janabyudaya Samstha (1982), Anveshi Research Center for women's studies (1985), Feminist Study Circle (1988), Asmita (1991).

in these organisations: "Though Left organisations have in recent years started talking about issues of gender and caste, 'male domination' was not a permissible word in the Seventies and Early-Eighties because it was seen as distracting from the issue of class" (Bageshree 2013). These organisations did not recognise women for their intellect. Women also did not have any importance or any space in these organisations. Women were offered similar gender roles that they used to do at their homes. Their role as an activist in these organisations has not changed their gender roles but they had to continue with the similar kind of work. Due to this discriminatory attitude of the male leaders, women activists left the organisations and started their own organisations. For e.g., Volga[4] started feminist study circle[5] as she felt that there was no respect for women's perspective in the leftist organisations. In a similar vein, though women played an important role in the Telangana people's struggle, their contribution was not recognised by the Communist party of India (Marxist-Leninist). Communist party did not treat the women on par with men in the movement. Women were offered only traditional gender roles in the party. Members of the party were writers, poets, and thinkers. They used writing as a tool to express their politics. In this context, many feminist translators started translating feminist texts and ideas into Telugu. They also documented the life stories of women who participated in the Telangana people's struggle as members of the communist party of India. As these translations and books raised many 'uncomfortable' questions about the communist party with regard to women's issues, they were opposed by the leftist parties[6] and revolutionary groups[7]. Feminist translators and activists continued their translation work despite the strong opposition, and eventually leftist organisations were forced to think about the questions raised by the women leaders.

[4] Volga is a well-known Telugu feminist writer, translator and activist.

[5] Feminist Study Circle was established in 1988 by Volga. The purpose of the study circle was to introduce the literature on patriarchy, sexuality, family and the feminist theories in the Telugu society.

[6] Communist Party of India.

[7] Virasam (Revolutionary Writers Association)

In 1960s, the leftist organisations disseminated the ideas of Marx through literatures in India. Chinese and Russian works of literature were also translated into many Indian languages, including Telugu, as the Indian leftist organisations were following the models of China and Russia. These organisations also built a strong network and mobilised people across the country. In this context, peasants, working class and middle class people and students were attracted to the Marxist ideas. For instance, POW was also started in 1974 by a group of women students who were influenced by Marxist thinking. In the Telugu context, feminist thinking was developed through the questions raised by women against the 'male domination' 'patriarchal nature' in the Revolutionary Groups. The entry of feminism in 1970s disturbed the Marxist groups in Telugu society, as it emerged from the women's movements and the lived experiences of women to understand the nature of gender inequalities in the society. It was also seen as an alternative to Marxism to understand the problems of women. Similarly, in the Telugu society, Feminism was termed as a western approach to split the people's movements by progressive thinkers.

Many women's organisations were formed in 1980s in Telugu society. It is in this vein that Volga's feminist study circle, established in 1988, played an important role in introducing literature on patriarchy, sexuality, family and feminist theories in Telugu society. Translators who introduced a feminist perspective into Telugu were subject to serious criticism. Despite a strong opposition, many feminist translators, organisations, magazines and publishing houses continued to translate and publish feminist texts in Telugu.

Feminist thinking is largely limited to middle class educated women who can read literature in English/Telugu. It includes students, writers, journalists, academicians, and activists, etc. who are in some way connected to the academics. It is a network of people with similar ideologies. They influence the literary thinking of Telugu people. All these people read feminist literature in English or Telugu as part of their academic courses and also during the political classes of feminist organisations. It is an academic/ intellectual circle that is interested in reading, discussing, thinking

and enlightening Telugu reading public about international feminist thinking through translation.

The Influence of Global Feminist Thinking

Influenced by the global feminist thinking, Telugu feminists translated many feminist texts from English into Telugu. The life and works of feminist writers like Shulamith Firestone, Andrea Dworkin, Kate Millet, Alexandra Kollantai, Emma Goldman, Betty Friedan, Virginia Woolf, Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Germaine Greer, bell hooks, Charlotte Perkins, Tony Morrison, and Alice Walker were introduced into Telugu. The objective was to introduce these pioneers of feminist movement and their significant texts in the form of summaries.

Volga, a renowned feminist writer and translator introduced the life story of Mary Wollstonecraft and her text *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). In this book, Mary advocates for women's rights and gender equality in education (Volga 2003: 13). This translation contributed to the debate on women's access to education in Telugu context. Volga also introduced the life story of John Stuart Mill including his essay 'Subjection of Women' (1869). It opposes the male domination over women and discusses the equality between men and women (Volga 2003: 33). The idea of women's liberation was introduced through the life and work of Emma Goldman (Volga 2003: 63). The summary translation of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique (*1963) suggests that women should have education, employment, decent salary and social awareness to come out of the false notion of the ideal or perfect housewife and mother. This translation challenged the ideal notion of the housewife who was expected to take care of kitchen, house, husband, and satisfy husband's sexual desires (Satyavathi 2006a: 19). The summary translation of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of one's own* (1929) suggests that, "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction". It also advocates that women can write only if they have financial independence, intellectual freedom, and their own space (Satyavathi 2006b: 23). Hence, these translations challenged existing narratives on women's education, employment, ideal housewife and constructed a narrative on women's liberation, financial and intellectual freedom.

Satyavathi in her short translation of *The Second Sex* (1949) says that it is important to know about the feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir before understanding her work *The Second Sex* (2006c: 21). She translated one of the famous statements of The Second Sex – "one is not born but rather becomes a woman" as "Strilu Puttaru, Tayaru Cheyabadataru" (2006d: 39). This translation gives a foundation to the feminist philosophy in Telugu context. The short translation of the life story of Kate Millet and *Sexual Politics* (1969) demonstrates how culture and society are dominated by men and how male dominated society suppresses women. It also shows Patriarchy as a system of social construction which systematically subjugates women (Satyavathi 2007: 23-24). This translation introduces the concept of patriarchy and reveals its manifestations and institutions. 'Good girls' are not expected to sing, dance and express their dreams and desires as per the patriarchal value system. A similar idea of patriarchy is presented in the translation of Viviana Mellet's *Winged Women* (1997). It is the story of a woman who was discouraged whenever she tried to sing, dance, speak truth, and give her view. Thus, this story introduces a woman who is trying to be autonomous and submissive to her husband as expected by the society (Samrajya Laxmi 2001: 75-77).

Telugu feminists also wrote feminist texts in Telugu drawing inspiration from Western/Latin American feminist texts. *Manaku Teliyani Mana Charitra (our history that we do not know 1986)* was one of the first historical texts on the role of women in the social movements. It was based on *Let Me speak! Testimony of Domitila, A Woman of the Bolivian Mines* (1978) and *Sandino's Daughters* (1995). Thus, *Manaku Teliyani Mana Charitra (our history that we do not know 1986)* is one of the first attempts to give voice to the women and narrate their stories which were never heard of. This attempt inspired many other writers to work on women's issues.

Similarly, *Savalaksha Sandehalu: Streela Arogya Samasyalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems,* 1991*)* is a complicated project. Initially, it came out in Telugu as *Savalaksha Sandehalu* (1991) because members of Stree Shakti Sanghatana (Women Power Organisation) wanted rural women to have access to it. It was inspired by *Our Bodies, Ourselves* of Boston women's

health collective. Many of the Stree Shakti Sanghatana members read *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. They were excited by the knowledge, and power of the book. Therefore, they decided to translate the book into Telugu. It discussed and provided information on women's reproductive health, sexuality, sexual health, mental health, birth control, and gender identity. It was translated into around twenty languages and influenced women's health movements across the world.

In a conversation with this researcher, Gita Ramaswamy, one of the writers of *Savalaksha Sandehalu* (*One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems*, 1991*)* opines that Telugu feminist writers and translators were influenced by the feminist movement in the west. She says:

> There is so much impact of the feminist movement of the West. Why to deny it? You know we are all impacted. I got a book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* of Boston women's health collective. I read that whole book in one night. It was so exciting. Naturally we are all influenced; why not I think it is good to read material elsewhere. We are all influenced in different ways. I was certainly influenced by reading materials (Eligedi, personal communication, February 13, 2014).

It shows that many Telugu feminist writers and activists were influenced by the feminist movement in the west. *Savalaksha Sandehalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems 1991)* is a product of the influence of the western feminist movement. It shows that the Telugu feminists were looking towards the west for understanding women's health. Women Activists from Stree Shakti Sanghatana and other feminist organisations in Hyderabad read this book *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and were impressed with the book. The first meetings of Stree Shakti Sanghatana were held in 1982 in which it was decided to translate *Our Bodies, Ourselves* into Telugu. Gradually, they realised that it was not possible to translate this book as their attempts to translate some of the chapters failed. As the focus of this book is middle class women and their experiences in the United States, feminist activists of Stree Shakti Sanghatana felt that it was not very useful for the women in the Indian context. Interviews were conducted with

women in Hyderabad to know their experiences and health problems. *Savalaksha Sandehalu (One Hundred Thousand Doubts: Women's Health Problems*, 1991*)* was then written in the Indian context. Although much of the information is based on the interviews, they translated scientific information related to women's sexuality and incorporated into the book. This work of *Savalaksha Sandehalu* started in 1983 and continued till 1991 for its publication.

Members of Stree Shakti Sanghatana opined that their book looks at women's health in the third world and thus, its political ramifications were more radical than *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. In fact, this book was a result of the joint work of five writers of Stree Shakti Sanghatana and one from the Hyderabad Book Trust (HBT). All these six people were active in the women's movement in Hyderabad. The primary objective of this book was to address the health issues of women in the rural areas. *Savalaksha Sandehalu* was well received. Around five thousand copies were sold soon after its release. Therefore, it is argued that this book has contributed substantially to the feminist knowledge in Telugu.

During the Telangana people's struggle[8], most of the women leaders were inspired by Russian feminist literature that was translated into Telugu. Prominent women leaders like Mallu Swarajyam, Kondapalli Koteshwaramma, Sugunamma, and Regalla Achchamamba were inspired by Russian Literature (Lalitha et al. 1989). They used to read literature and books on Marxist philosophy as part of their political classes. The people who participated in the Telangana People's Struggle (in 1940s) were inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the French Revolution of 1789. The educated women were influenced by the ideas of Russian, French and Chinese Revolutions" (Eligedi 2014: 4). Therefore, Russian feminism and Chinese feminism were a great influence on the women leaders who participated in the Telangana people's struggle.

[8] It was a peasant struggle against the feudal exploitation of the rulers for land and liberation.

HBT[9] published many translations on Karl Marx, and Agnes Smedley in 1980s. These translations were aimed at explaining the Marxist economic theory, feudalism, capitalism, socialist movement and the future. HBT also published books on the life and thoughts of social reformers in India and other countries like Ambedkar[10], Jyotirao Phule[11], Mandela, and Martin Luther King. These translations were aimed at introducing in Telugu, the lives of the great thinkers and ideologues who fought against various forms of oppression across the world.

Many essays, articles and stories on the lives of feminist activists and writers were translated and published in the women's magazines like *Bhumika* (Role) and *Mahila Margam* (women's path). These translations show that they were more interested in the women's movements and life stories of women leaders from China and Russia. That is why these magazines published the stories and writings of Clara Zetkin, Kollontai, Winnie Mandela, Frederick Engels, and Jenny Marx. They published the stories about women's movements in Vietnam, Latin America, and the Philippines. It was an attempt to introduce the role of women in these women's movements through translation. These magazines tried to disseminate the ideas and thoughts of socialist feminism. Many Chinese and Russian feminist texts were translated into Telugu. People were interested to read texts from other places. For instance: Volga's translation of Agnes Smedley's *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution* (1976) as S*amannyula Sahasam* (1984), Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth* (1929) as *Bhumi Puthrika* in 1985; Alexandra Kollontai's *Three Generations* (1923) as *Mudu Tharalu* (1989) generated a lot of debate in Telugu about marriages, family, compulsory childbearing, domestic abuse, women's sexuality, male

[9] It is a progressive publishing house in Hyderabad. It publishes literature and translations on feminism to support the feminist movement and other social movements in Telugu public sphere.

[10] He is one of the architects of the Indian constitution. He theorised the caste based discrimination and fought against the caste system in India. He is known as the crusader for the rights of Dalits and other marginalised communities.

[11] He was a great philosopher, anti-caste crusader and a pioneer of women's education in India. He fought against the untouchability and struggled for the development of people from lower castes.

domination, sexual violence, sexual relations, free love, reproductive rights, birth control, and sexual freedom. Thus, Volga translated these texts to bring the ideas about the institution of marriage and women's empowerment into Telugu context. These texts also demonstrate the role of women in many social and political movements and struggles. Many Chinese and Russian feminist texts were translated into Telugu to encourage women activists to participate in the movements. For instance: Claudie Broyelle's *Women's Liberation in China* is translated into Telugu as *Chinalo Sthrivimukthi* in 1996. The influence of Chinese, Russian and International feminist thinking is visible in the work of feminist study circle (1988). The translations of *Mahila Margam* (Women's Path) also aimed at disseminating Chinese and Russian feminist knowledge into Telugu through translations. That is why they published most of the feminist translated texts from these countries.

Mahila Margam (Women's Path) published mostly the translations of Russian, Chinese and European feminist texts as the editorial collective was interested in these feminisms. Although *Bhumika* (Role) has also published Russian feminist translations, it focused mainly on translating and introducing the ground-breaking feminist texts and short biographies of pioneers of feminist movement. Both the magazines published at least one translation in every issue that they felt as necessary and useful for the women's movement. As stated, their objective was to make progressive literature available to Telugu readers. Telugu feminist activists were influenced by Clara Zetkin, Kollontai and Emma Goldman. They were also influenced by translations from identity movements; Jyothiba Phule's *Gulamgiri* (Slavery), and Savitri Bai Phule's *Nenu Savitri Baini* (I am Savitri Bai).

These translations were aimed at introducing the role of women in the social movements across the world and motivating women to fight against the patriarchy in the Telugu society. These books were also intended to improve the understanding of women about Zetkin's concepts on the liberation of women from oppression and to circulate socialist feminism among women to build a strong women's movement. It was an attempt to introduce the history of the women who participated in the social movements through the

intellectual community like writers, editors, novelists, students and activists who joined the struggle and contributed to writing and publishing stories about the importance of women's participation in the movement. The stories of many women heroes in the history of the Chinese and Russian revolutions are translated into Telugu to motivate the women activists in the Telugu public sphere. These translations provide an analysis on women's assertion in various roles in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, demonstrating how women challenged the patriarchal society and gave new hope to the people in the Latin American countries. It is also an attempt to introduce to the Telugu readers the struggles of the women who were transformed from the traditional gender roles like housewives and care takers of children to the agitators and activists who can voice their concerns in Latin America.

There are many translations that have introduced the life and struggles of Clara Zetkin, Kollontai, and other women leaders to the Telugu readers. From many translations, it becomes clear that these magazines are not very particular about mentioning neither the names of the translator nor the names of the source writers as their focus is mainly on conveying the texts and their messages in Telugu. There seems to be, thus, no fixed or clear policy as to how the translations are to be presented, what details are to be furnished or not to be furnished and the like. Though translation had an important place within these two Telugu women's magazines, *Bhumika* (Role) and *Mahila Margam* (Women's Path), translators' names were not mentioned in some of the translated articles in these two magazines. Similarly, the magazines did not have a practice to indicate that a text published is a translation. Articles, short essays and stories about western feminist writers, activists and movements were usually published anonymously. In case of some translated articles, the names of the source authors and publication details were also not mentioned. It is interesting to note that though translation was used by these magazines to circulate the feminist ideas, the role of the translator was neglected. On top of it, the translators also made themselves invisible in their work by choosing to go for readable and smooth translations in their attempt to make the texts accessible to everyone.

However, the editors and translators of these magazines had a different view towards the translator's invisibility. It is learnt that in the leftist and feminist movement, translation was taken as a 'political responsibility' to bring the international feminist literature within the reach of the feminist activists and feminist groups as a part of their work within the organisation. They translated texts as part of the movement and it was considered as one method of organising. The uniqueness of the translations of these little magazines is that they are done by the activists and translators to disseminate their ideology. Translation has been central to the ideology and thought of Telugu women's magazines. Feminist movement (second-wave) began in 1960s in the West and circulated across the world. Since 1980s Telugu feminists translated feminist ideas into Telugu from other languages not only to be aware of the nature of the movement and learn the experience of the women elsewhere but also to motivate and inspire themselves, to strengthen the movement and also to disseminate the feminist ideology to all sections of the society. That is the reason why these magazines have published many translations since 1990s till date. These translations have been useful in encouraging the feminist activists and to strengthen the movement when it is spearheading for women's liberation.

Black and Dalit Feminist Thinking

Dalits[12] and African Americans face inequalities and discrimination due to casteism in India and racism in USA. These oppressed communities have shared history of experience, struggles and subjugation. The existential struggles of Afro-American in the USA and the Dalits in India are struggles for dignity, self-respect, identity and better life. The Indian intellectuals like Phule and Ambedkar were inspired by the struggles of Afro-Americans. The interaction between Dalit feminist literature and Black feminist literature began at a conference on racism in Durban in 2001. Many Dalit writers have participated in this conference and laid the

[12] Dalit means broken or oppressed. It is a political term refers to the people from mariginalised sections of the Indian society.

foundation for the political solidarity between Dalit thinkers and African-American thinkers.

Satyavathi translated and introduced the life story of African American women writer Alice Walker in the June 2008 issue of *Bhumika*. Satyavathi was inspired by the African American writers after reading Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982). It narrates the life story of Celie who tries to lead an independent life despite the poverty, racial discrimination, and male domination. It also addressed the issue of sexual violence in the lives of black women and their struggles to resist the violence and to be resilient (2008a: 23-24). Satyavathi also translated and introduced the life story of Toni Morrison in the August 2008 issue of *Bhumika*. She developed an interest in the works of Morrison after reading *Beloved* (1987). The purpose of this translation is to introduce Toni Morrison to Telugu readers. This novel depicts the journey of a black woman Sethe from cruelty, sexual abuse, and slavery to freedom. It is about her hope and endurance to resist the cruelty for freedom (2008b: 25-26). The translation of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison's texts demonstrates that the black women fight against racism, classicism and sexism for freedom.

K. Suneeta Rani translated and introduced bell hooks' *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981) in the November 2005 issue of *Bhumika* as Samantara Strivaadam – bell hooks' 'Ain't a Woman?'. It was published under the column Kitiki (window). The translator believed that African-American women's literature would be useful for the Telugu readers to understand the identity politics. It is an attempt to introduce the black feminist theory to inspire the Dalit feminist writers and activists in the Telugu public sphere. Black women have been facing three-fold oppression by white men, white women, and black men. Mainstream feminist movement ignored the issues of black women and their experiences. Therefore, black women wrote about their struggles against racism, sexism, and classism. Bell Hooks proposes that feminist movement should work towards ending the sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression of black women (2005: 17). The main objective of this translation is to initiate a dialogue between black feminism and Dalit feminism. It has laid a theoretical foundation for the dialogue between black

feminist thought and Dalit feminist thought as it gave critical insights into the theorisation of black women's experience. It inspired Telugu scholars to discuss the Dalit women's experience in the light of black female experience and struggles.

Many Dalit women writers were influenced by black feminist thinking and their works. Telugu Dalit feminists have read the works of black feminist writers. Inspired by the black feminism, Dalit feminists started writing about dalit feminism. They borrowed slogans like 'Dalit lives matter' with the inspiration from 'Black lives matter'. Black feminism provided the critical tools for the Dalit feminists to theorise their own experiences and fight for their rights. Telangana Dalit feminist writer Gogu Shyamala edited *Nallapoddu - Dalitha Strila Sahityam 1921-2002 (Black Dawn: Dalit Women's Writings, 1921-2002).* She was inspired by African American feminist literature to edit *Nallapoddu* (*Black Dawn* 2003) in Telugu. Many Telugu Dalit feminist writers were influenced by the Black feminist works. In a conversation with this researcher, Shyamala says that "when we look at such powerful expressions of Dalit's, like *'Dalit Panthers' 'Dalit is power'* they were in fact can be said as relied on such slogans given in some other countries as: *'Black Panthers'*, *'Black is Power,'* and were actually derived from English, not only as slogans but also as the theories and experiences of their movements" (Eligedi 2014: 4). These ideas and theories were translated into Telugu. They inspired the Dalit women to understand and relate themselves to the struggles of African-Americans. These translated theories helped Dalits to gain acceptability for their struggle in Telugu public sphere.

There were many translations which attempted to introduce the struggles of African-American women against the slavery and the oppression in the US. The life, struggles and works of Rosa Parks (April 2008), Toni Morrison (August 2008), Alice Walker (June 2008), bell hooks (November 2005), Sojourner Truth (March 2008) were introduced into Telugu. The purpose of these translations was to introduce these significant black civil rights activists, women writers-activists and their works to encourage the Dalit feminist writers in Telugu Public Sphere. It was an attempt to introduce the black feminist writings to inspire the Dalit feminist writers and

activists in the Telugu public sphere. Thus, these translations discussed various issues like the effect of racism on black women during slavery, the marginalisation of black women, racism within the women's movement, and black women's participation in the feminist movements. These ideas provided critical tools for the Dalit women to develop a theoretical base for the Dalit feminist writings and movements in Telugu public sphere.

The works of Savitribai Phule, Jyothiba Phule and Ambedkar were translated into Telugu. These works played an important role in strengthening the Dalit movements. Many activists are inspired by these works and ideas of Phule and Ambedkar. In a conversation with this researcher, Gogu Shyamla argues, "translations played a major role in spreading and strengthening both the movements and ideologies as well. Particularly, the Dalit and woman movements and ideologies after that of Marxist ones circulated through translation" (Eligedi 2014: 3). Thus, many Dalit feminist writers like Gogu Shyamala were influenced by translations of Phule and Ambedkar. Translations provided critical tools for Dalit writers to engage with the feminist writing and questions raised by the feminists. Thus, the Dalit feminist writers were influenced by Black feminism, Phule-Ambedkarite feminism, and International feminism. The questions that Dalit feminists raised broadened the framework of Feminism and made mainstream feminists think about reaching out to the Dalit feminist writers in the Telugu public sphere.

Conclusion

In this paper, the analysis revealed that the readings of Marx were the influence on the leftist women activists and their cadre in the 1960s and 1970s. In 1980s, they were influenced by European, American, Chinese and Russian feminists like Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Betty Friedan, German Greer, Shulamith Firestone, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and Emma Goldman. Similarly, Dalit feminist activists and thinkers were influenced by black feminism, and Phule-Ambedkarite feminism. Therefore, it is argued in this paper that the activities of the feminist organisations were influenced by various feminist thinkers across the world. Thus,

feminist organisations became important agents in translating feminist ideas; but such organisations are products of individual efforts, and it is the commitment and dedication of individuals like Gita Ramaswamy as a publisher of Hyderabad Book Trust (HBT) that sustained the feminist translation into Telugu to a large extent. Though HBT published Russian and French feminist books and other books on international agents of change, it focused on introducing the life of Indian feminists, and Dalit feminists into Telugu. The feminist and other translations of HBT have been influenced by an ideology and these translations in turn have influenced the Telugu reading public in a big way for the past three decades. The feminist translations have in fact emerged as powerful instruments in disseminating feminist knowledge among the Telugu reading public. These translations played a crucial role in bringing new voices, new ideas and new thoughts into the Telugu public sphere and are successful in informing, educating and enlightening the women in general.

The paper analysed the role of women's magazines and the role of the translators in the dissemination of feminist knowledge through translations. The stories of the western feminist writers and activists introduced to Telugu readers through these magazines are intended to eliminate the misconceptions about feminism that were prevalent in the Telugu public sphere. These misconceptions were particularly high in the left circles and the Telugu society in general in the 1980s and 1990s. Leftist groups did not have a proper understanding of what feminism was. Therefore, it became necessary for the women activists to educate the public on various aspects related to feminism and to bring about awareness on what feminism actually meant by introducing in Telugu the stories of the famous activists who fought for the rights of women and the liberation of women across the world. The translators, publishers, and magazines became successful in achieving their goal in bringing about a change in people's opinion about feminism and feminist movements in general. This paper established that Feminist activists, translators, publishing houses and magazines used translation as a tool to disseminate feminist ideology and the politics.

References

BAGESHREE, S. 2013. Writing is a Critical Form of Activism. *The Hindu*. Accessed online: https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Bangalore/writing-is-a-critical-form-of-activism/article4325477.ece.

BEAUVOIR, SIMONE DE. 2006c. *The Second Sex* (P. Satyavathi, Trans.). *Bhumika*, 21-22.

BEAUVOIR, SIMONE DE. 2006d. *The Second Sex* (P. Satyavathi, Trans.). *Bhumika*, 39-40.

BERTACCO, SIMONA. 2003. The Canadian Feminists' Translation Project: Between Feminism and Postcolonialism. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 2. 233–245. Accessed online: https://lans-tts.uantwerpen.be/index.php/LANS-TTS/article/view/88/42.

CASTRO, OLGA & ANDREWS, MARK. 2009. (Re-) Examining Horizons in Feminist Translation Studies: Towards a Third Wave. *MonTI*, 1. 59-86. Accessed online: https://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/13037/1/MonTI_01_08_trans.pdf

CASTRO, OLGA & ERGUN, EMEK. (Eds.). 2017. Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives. *Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies.* New York: Routledge.

CHAMBERLAIN, LORI. 1998. Gender Metaphorics in Translation. In B. Mona (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies.* 93-96. London & New York: Routledge.

DAVIS, KATHY & EVANS, MARY. 2016. *Transatlantic Conversations: Feminism as Travelling Theory*. London & New York: Routledge.

DAVIS, KATHY. 2007. *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across the Borders.* Durham & London: Duke University Press. doi: 10.1215/9780822390251.

DEVIKA, J. 2008. Being "in-translation" in a Post-Colony. *Translation Studies,* 1(2). 182-196. doi: 10.1080/14781700802113507.

DONGCHAO, MIN. 2007. Duihua (Dialogue) In-between. *Interventions*, 9(2). 174- 193. doi: 10.1080/13698010701409111.

ELIGEDI, RAJKUMAR. 2014. In Conversation with Shyamala Gogu. *Writers in Conversation*, 1(1). 1-9. Accessed online: https://fac.flinders.edu.au/dspace/api/core/bitstreams/918b175c-93fb-4d29-8bce-4a244d047408/content.

ELIGEDI, RAJKUMAR. 2020. Volga as an International Agent of Feminist Translation. In Flotow, Luise von & Kamal, Hala (Eds.), *The*

Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender. London: Routledge.

FLOTOW, LUISE VON & KAMAL, HALA. (Eds.). 2020. *The Routledge Handbook of Translation, Feminism and Gender.* London: Routledge.

FLOTOW, LUISE VON. 1991. Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories. *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, 4(2). 69-84. Accessed online: https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ttr/1991-v4-n2-ttr1475/037094ar/.

FLOTOW, LUISE VON. 1997. *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'.* Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

FRIEDAN, BETTY. 2006a. *The Feminine Mystique* (P. Satyavathi, Trans.). *Bhumika*, 19-21.

HALA, KAMAL. 2018. Travelling Concepts in Translation: Feminism and Gender in the Egyptian Context. *Synergy*, 14(1). 131–145. Accessed online: http://www.synergy.ase.ro/issues/2018-vol14-no-1/9-HALA.pdf.

HAMERLAIN, SOUAD. 2005. Translation as a Transmitter of Feminist Ideology. *Annales du* Patrimoine. 81-85. Accessed online: https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/downArticle/366/3/3/39057.

KAMALA, N. (Ed.). 2009. *Translating Women: Indian Interventions*. New Delhi: Zubaan.

LALITHA, K & VASANTHA, KANNABIRAN & RAMA, MELKOTE & UMA, MAHESWARI & SUSIE, THARU & VEENA, SHATRUGNA. 1989. *We Were Making History. Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (Stree Shakti Sanghatana, Trans.). London: Zed Books. Zed Books. (Original work published in 1986).

MILLETT, KATE. 2007. *Sexual Politics* (P. Satyavathi, Trans.). *Bhumika*, 23-24.

NIRANJANA, TEJASWINI. 1998. Feminism and Translation in India: Contexts, Politics, Futures. *Cultural Dynamics*, 10(2). 133-146.

REIMONDEZ, MARIA. 2009. The Curious Incident of Feminist Translation in Galicia: Court Cases, Lies and Gendern@tions. *Galicia21* A. 68-89. Accessed online: http://www.galicia21journal.org/A/pdf/galicia21_6_reimondez.pdf.

SAID, EDWARD. 1983. *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

SAMRAJYA LAXMI, D. 2001.Vanitha Vihangam. *Bhumika*. 75-77.

SATYAVATHI, P. 2008a. Alice Walker. *Bhumika*. 23- 24.

SATYAVATHI, P. 2008b. Tony Morrison. *Bhumika*. 25-26.

SIMON, SHERRY. 1996. *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London & New York: Routledge.

SPIVAK, GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY. 2000. The Politics of Translation. In Venuti, Lawrence (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader.* 397-416. London & New York: Routledge.

THARAKESHWAR, V.B. & USHA, M. 2010. *Survey and Analysis of Social Science Higher Education Material Production Initiative in Kannada; Translation Strategies, Stories of Success/Failures.* Mumbai: Ratan Tata Trust.

TYMOCZKO, MARIA. 2000. Translation and Political Engagement: Activism, Social Change, and the Role of Translation in Geopolitical Shifts. *The Translator*, 6 (1). 23-47. doi:10.1080/13556509.2000.10799054.

VOLGA. 2003. *Tholi Velugulu-Sthrivaada - Siddhantha Vikaasam*. Hyderabad: Swechcha Prachuranalu.

WOOLF, VIRGINIA. 2006b. *A Room of One's Own* (P. Satyavathi, Trans.). *Bhumika.* 23-25.

***

About the Author

Eligedi Rajkumar
Eligedi Rajkumar is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Literature, School of Literary Studies, The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.
Email: rajkumar[DOT]eligedi[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Cite this Work:

Rajkumar, Eligedi. 2023. The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu Context. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 113-133.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar6

Punjabi-English Literary Translation:
Challenges and Possibilities

KULVEER KAUR

Abstract

Translation activity in modern Punjab predominantly flows 'downstream' from other languages into Punjabi, with comparatively little output of translated works from Punjabi into other languages. Despite this, the translation of Punjabi literature into English has created a valuable space for dialogue between languages and cultures. This article presents a synoptic view of the problems, principles, and possibilities involved in Punjabi-English literary translation. It explores different translation theories and approaches commonly used in Punjabi-English literary translation, highlighting critical studies available in both Punjabi and English.

Keywords: Literary translation, Translation Studies, Poetry, Fiction, Culture, Mistranslation.

Introduction

Literary translations help different cultures and literatures to flourish beyond borders marked by the constraints of a language. The encounter between the Punjabi and English languages began during the period of British colonial rule in India which started in the mid-18th century. The earliest translations of Punjabi literature into English were done by British colonial administrators and scholars, who were interested in understanding Punjabi culture and society. These translations were often done for academic and scholarly purposes, and were focused on capturing the cultural and historical aspects of Punjabi life. Despite the colonial context in which these translations were produced, they laid the groundwork for the development of Punjabi-English literary translation. They also played a role in promoting cross-cultural understanding and providing a window into the rich cultural traditions of Punjab.

However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the translation of Punjabi literature into English gained momentum, with the efforts of writers and translators such as Mohan Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon, Amrita Pritam, Khushwant Singh, Shiv Kumar Batalvi, Kartar Singh Duggal, Dalip Kaur Tiwana, Gurdial Singh and many more. These writers and translators were part of a broader movement towards the promotion and preservation of Punjabi culture and literature, and they played a key role in the development of Punjabi-English literary translation as a distinct field of study. Today, Punjabi-English literary translation continues to be a growing field, with many new writers and translators creating a dialogue and continuing relevance of Punjabi literature to readers around the world.

While a considerable amount of Punjabi literature has been translated into English, there remains a significant lack of translation theory and constructive discussions in the field of Punjabi-English literary translation. The contention is born out that the translators face many practical and theoretical challenges; there are possibilities available to systematically evaluate the quality of literary translations by considering how a translator tackles cultural, lexical, syntactical and stylistic challenges.

Review of Literature

A comprehensive survey of the critical studies available in the field of Punjabi-English literary translation reveals that, despite some notable achievements, this area of research is still in need of further inquiry and exploration. The following review aims to identify and evaluate some of the key works that have contributed to the development of this field, and to outline the main areas of inquiry that require further attention and investigation.

In January 1987, *Punjabi Dunia* magazine published a special volume dedicated to the challenges of translating poetry and fiction. The volume included an article by Sant Singh Sekhon titled "Anuvad - Ik Kala". Later, Tejwant Singh Gill translated the article into English as "Translation is an Art". which was published in *Sant Singh Sekhon: Selected Writings* (2005). In the article, Sekhon examined Punjabi translations of Kalidasa's plays and expressed his concern that "maybe their Punjabi translations do not rise to the

level of their counterparts in Hindi or some other Indian languages" (Gill 2005: 388). He attributed this issue to the lack of interest in classical literature among Punjabi readers, stating that "Punjabi people are less concerned with their own language and they lack interest in classical things" (2005: 388). This critique raises important questions about the role of readership in shaping the quality of literature. The lack of interest and engagement from Punjabi readers in classical literature may hinder the quality of Punjabi translations and ultimately impact the vitality of Punjabi literature. Literary translation is important in revitalizing a literature by bringing in fresh perspectives and ideas from foreign cultures.

In the article "Galap da Anuvad". Gurbaksh Singh Frank discusses the challenges of translating fiction (Singh 1987: 11-21). However, in "Galap Sahit de Anuvad dian Samasiawan ate Sambhabnawan". Gurmukh Sing Jeet argues that each text has its own set of unique challenges that require different solutions in the translation process (Singh 1987: 40-45). In a similar vein, Karam Singh Kapur in his work "Kavita da Anuvad" compares two Punjabi translations of Light of Asia by Gurbaksh Singh Preetlari and Mohan Singh (Singh 1987: 60-80). These critical studies reveal the complex nature of Punjabi-English literary translation and the importance of carefully considering the nuances of each work being translated.

Max Arthur Macauliffe's translation of Guru Granth Sahib appears as a part of *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors* (1909), published in six volumes by Oxford University Press. Gurbachan Singh Bhullar in his essay "Bani da Sidakvaan Angreji Anuvadak Max Arthur Macauliffe" (2020) discusses several aspects of the translation such as why it is important, how Macauliffe choose the project, who helped him to complete it and what kind of problems he faced while working on it. In his autobiography titled *Arsi* (1980), Principal Teja Singh also writes about Macauliffe's work undertaken over as many as 16 years.

Gurbachan Singh Bhullar in his book *Kalam-Siahi* (2020) shares examples of some poor translations under the title "Anuvadakan de Kuch Hor Karname." Harishankar Parsai was a satirist in modern Hindi literature. Bhullar noticed that one newspaper translated satirist as "sitarvadak. In another newspaper, leukemia was

mistranslated as "leucoderma" (Bhullar 2020: 140). Additionally, "keynote lecture" is always translated as "kunjivat bhashan" (2020: 142). These examples highlight the importance of accurate translation and the potential consequences of mistranslation in literature.

Ajmer Rode translated Gurdial Singh's novel *Marhi da Deeva* (1964) into English as *The Last Flicker.* The first edition of the translation was published in 1991 by the Sahitya Akademi. In *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (2001) Jeremy Munday carries one study of *The Last Flicker* (1991). Munday discusses how "the postcolonial theories help to understand the power relations that operate around the translation process" (Munday 2001: 138). In this study, Munday questions the translation of "social dialect of small village community" by means of "[the] sociolect of urban working-class North America" (20021: 138). In response to this, a revised edition of *The Last Flicker* appeared in 2010, published by the National Book Trust. Rode explains his approach to translation, stating that his translation is focused on the audience. He had an international audience in mind while translating. His primary objective was to preserve and convey the emotional essence of Punjabi expressions, without being overly concerned about cultural dislocations. Additionally, he chose to utilize English idioms that he was most familiar with.

It indicates that the translator is mainly concerned with making the translation emotionally impactful for an international audience, rather than worrying too much about cultural nuances or using a literal translation of Punjabi idioms. The translator prioritizes using English idioms that they were comfortable with, which may have resulted in some cultural dislocations or departures from the original text. It is important for the translator to also consider cultural nuances and differences in order to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the preceding text[1]. The decision to use a particular

[1] According to Avadhesh Kumar Singh (2016), the preceding text is a more appropriate term to denote the text to be translated, which is also known as the Source Text (ST); the term "succeeding text" refers to the text as translated. The use of the terms "preceding text" and "succeeding text" is intended to challenge the binarism implicit in the terms "source text" and "target text" because this

English idiom should also be made with careful consideration of the target audience and the context in which the translation will be read.

Hardilbagh Singh Gill di Sirjana ate Anuwad Kala (2016) edited by Sikander Singh is a collection of essays written on Gill's art of translation. Gill is known for translating Punjabi works into English and vice versa. One of the articles in the book is "H.S. Gill's Translations of Shakespeare: The Art of Double Assimilation" by Rajesh Sharma, which likely discusses Gill's approach to translating Shakespeare's works. Additionally, the book includes an interview of Hardilbagh Singh Gill conducted by Sawarnjit Savi.

While there is substantial amount of literature on translation in general, and some specific studies on Punjabi literary translation in particular, there is a lack of systematic and sustained analysis of the problems, principles, and processes involved in Punjabi-English literary translation. In other words, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to a systematic and sustained analysis of the challenges and techniques of Punjabi-English literary translation. Such an analysis would require a more in-depth examination of the linguistic, cultural, and literary differences between the two languages, as well as the cultural and social factors that influence translation practices in the Punjabi-English context.

Establishing Principles and Guidelines for the Translation Process

Literary translation is an arduous undertaking as it involves the question of cultural as well as verbal translatability. The domain of the literary text is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. A literary text is an experience. Any good translation has to capture as much of the richness of that experience as possible. David Damrosch, in his book *What is World Literature* (2003) writes that "a text is read as literature if we dwell on the beauties of its language, its forms, and its themes, and don't take it as primarily factual in intent" (Damrosch 2003: 288). He suggests that a literary text is not meant

binarism privileges the "source text". The terms "succeeding" and "preceding" take away the advantage of one text against another, i.e. they temporally precede and succeed but otherwise they are on an equal footing.

to merely convey an idea or some information. A good translation adds value and significance to the text translated and, further, it strives to produce an echo of the original.

A literary text "either gains or loses in translation" (Damrosch 2003: 289). Sometimes a literary text has a significant value in its own language and culture but its translation diminishes that value in the receiving language[2]. However, sometimes a text gains in translation and becomes even more esteemed work in the receiving language. A text loses in translation when the "language of the preceding text is not translated well or when the cultural assumptions do not travel well" (Damrosch 2003: 287). But the loss in translation does not mean that the practice of translation should be stopped. In this connection, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe has memorably remarked that "literary translation is impossible but important" (qtd. in Cook 2003: 56). The reason he gives is that "left to itself every literature will exhaust its vitality, if it is not refreshed by the interest and contributions of a foreign one" (qtd. in Damrosch 2014: 350). In addition to this, some writers have received recognition only after their works were translated into other languages. The Latin American "boom"[3] writers, for instance, attained visibility in the global literary arena only after their works were translated into French and acknowledged by French critics. Similarly, Jorge Luis Borges is often regarded as a creation of France due to the recognition he received there. Danilo Kiš's international acclaim coincided with his elevation through translation into French, which helped him transcend the confines of his native Serbo-Croatian language. Rabindranath Tagore's universal recognition, epitomized by his Nobel Prize, can be traced back to the translation of his own writings from Bengali into English (Casanova 2004: 135).

[2] By receiving language means the language of the succeeding text in which a text is being translated.

[3] The term denotes a literary movement which started in the1960s when the works of Latin American novelists Julio Cortázar of Argentina, Carlos Fuentes of Mexico, Mario Vargas Llosa of Peru and Gabriel García Márquez of Colombia began to circulate throughout the world.

In "Notes and Queries for a Better Understanding of West-Eastern Divan". Goethe differentiates between three "epochs" of translation. The first epoch, he says, "acquaints us with a foreign country in our own terms; a translation in plain prose serves this purpose the best" (Goethe 2002). This kind of translation fulfils the need to understand a foreign tongue in terms of one's own language and culture. It is used to quickly read a text in order to grasp its principal ideas and arguments. Martin Luther's translation of the Bible is an example of Goethe's first epoch. In the second epoch, Goethe says, "one is indeed able to imagine oneself in the circumstances of the foreign country, yet is only concerned to adopt foreign ideas and reproduce them in one's native style." Goethe names this phase as "parodistic." He notes that the English translation of Kalidasa's *Meghadūta* by Horace Hayman Wilson is "from the second epoch of translation, being paraphrasing and supplementary". The translation is in iambic pentameter. Goethe describes the third and most important epoch as one in which "one wishes to make a translation identical to the original, not in such a way that the former replaces…the latter, but rather occupies the place of…the latter." He favours the preservation of style, images and language used in original text. He says that a good translation "approaches interlinearity" (Goethe 2002).

Goethe's idea of "interlinear space" refers to resonance or suggestion by means of words which suggest but do not directly express something. To illustrate this with the help of Avtar Pash's poem "Sab ton Khatarnak", one can take the word "khatarnak" (Pash 2015: 371). In English language, the word "khatarnak" is denoted as "menacing" or "terrifying". But Pash has used the word in the sense of "dangerous". Translators are supposed to catch the resonance of literary expression and exercise the necessary freedom to produce a translation which has fidelity to the preceding text. It is important to aim for a translation that is as faithful as possible to the preceding text while also being effective in the receiving language.

When it comes to literary translation, fidelity is often discussed in terms of how closely the translation adheres to the original text. However, this does not mean that the translation should be a literal copy or imitation of the original. Instead, fidelity means capturing the essence of the original text and conveying it in a way that is faithful to its meaning and spirit, while also taking into account the

linguistic and cultural differences between the source and target languages. In some cases, this may mean that the expression used in the translation may appear different from the literal meaning of the words in the original text. This is because certain words and phrases may not have direct equivalents in the target language, or may carry cultural connotations that cannot be fully conveyed in a literal translation. In these cases, the translator must exercise their judgment to determine the best way to convey the intended meaning of the original text in the target language.

Avadhesh Kumar Singh in his "Translation Studies in the 21st Century" says that the idea of discourse as the basic unit of translation emphasizes that words cannot be considered as independent entities in translation. Instead, words should be viewed as part of a larger context and discourse, which can influence their meaning and significance (Singh 2016: 36). In some cases, this may require leaving behind strict notions of equivalency and instead focusing on conveying the overall sense and impact of the original text. By treating discourse as the basic unit of translation, translators can work towards producing translations that capture the essence of the original text, rather than simply providing a word-for-word rendering.

Lydia Davis emphasizes the importance of three factors in determining the quality of a translation: the translator's knowledge of the source language (in this case, French) including its language, history, and culture, the translator's understanding of the task at hand, and the translator's ability to write fluently and expressively in the target language (in this case, English) (Davis 2021: 496). Cultural familiarity and insight, a clear view of one's work as a translator and flawless command of the language of translator are, according to Davis necessary for a good translation. The translator should have the ability to read the text not only correctly but also deeply. The literary translator has to be a meticulous reader, for then she will not under-interpret and over-interpret a text.

As Lydia Davis has remarked, any linguistic system is rooted in a cultural system. Punjabi culture, for example is not the culture normally and directly available to an English writer. Even if the translator is from Punjab and is translating into English, is using a

linguistic and cultural system which is very dissimilar to Punjabi. In such conditions, translation is a real challenge because the translator has to try to approximate and recreate the symbolic universe in which the literary work exists. A literary work is an experience; as an experience, it is inseparable from its implicit symbolic universe. One enters a book and lives in it. It is like one has entered in another period, another place and another culture. It is a part of the difficult task of the translator to comprehend the various dimensions of a text and to appropriately evoke its symbolic universe in order to resolve the problems of translatability where the linguistic and cultural systems have few correspondences.

Establishing principles and guidelines for the translation process is a crucial first step in Punjabi-English literary translation. These principles and guidelines serve as a roadmap for the translators to navigate the complexities and challenges of translation. It is important to understand that translation is not simply a matter of finding equivalent words or phrases in the target language, but rather an art that requires sensitivity to the nuances and cultural context of the source text. By following these principles and guidelines, translators can produce high-quality translations that are both faithful to the original text and effective in the receiving language.

Identifying Specific Translation Problems

Literary translation poses certain peculiar problems to translators. J. C. Catford observes, "Untranslatability occurs when it is impossible to build functionally relevant features of the situation into the contextual meaning of the TL text" (Catford 1967: 94). For example, the title of the Punjabi novel *Marhi da Deeva* has a specific cultural significance. The word "marhi" has no equivalent in English language. "Deeva" is an earthen lamp but it has certain connotations in Punjabi language and culture, which may need explanation in translation. Contextual translation of certain culturally specific terms is thus a challenge for translators. When translators leave a word untranslated, it may pose hindrances for the reader of the translated text and so an explanatory note may be of help. This is what Vladimir Nabokov did while translating Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. However, as Avadhesh Kumar Singh

writes that the issue of untranslatability lies with the translator rather than the act of translation itself. Furthermore, what may be considered untranslatable by one translator could be rendered translatable by others. Every text that is created has the potential to be translated. If a text proves to be untranslatable for a translator currently, it is possible that a more skilled translator in the future will be able to tackle the task successfully (Singh 2016: 34).

Such is the difficulty of cultural translation that sometimes a translator errs by choosing an inappropriate word. In *The Skeleton*[4], Khushwant Singh translates "gurh di rodi" as "sugar candy". "Gurh" is jaggery in English and "gurh di rodi" could be translated as a piece of jaggery (Singh 2017: 6). "Jaggery" (gurh) has a special resonance in Punjabi culture; when a father offers a piece of jaggery to a boy, it may mean he is considering the boy as a match for his daughter. But sugar candy has an altogether different significance in English culture. As a consequence, readers unfamiliar with the Punjabi context would most likely misinterpret the meaning.

Mistranslation also occurs when translators misread or misrepresent the preceding text and the translation diverges significantly from the preceding text. In such cases, translators simply fail to build bridges between cultures. Moreover, the nature of content, form, words, images, tone, sounds and rhythms in the preceding text is a major challenge in literary translation. In *Alms in the Name of a Blind Horse*[5], mistranslation is the major problem. In English translation, a character named Beer Kaur first occurred as Beero (Nayar 2016: 48) and was then translated as "brother" (p.55). "Basaar" is turmeric powder in Punjabi but is translated as "besan" (p.69), which is gram flour. "Salari" is a woven cloth like a dupatta, used to cover the head. It is translated as "salwar" (Nayar 2016: 118). The given examples suggest that there are issues of accuracy and consistency in the translation process, particularly with regards to the translation of specific words and terms. The correct translation of words is essential to convey the intended meaning and maintain

[4] Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950) translated as *The Skeleton* by Khushwant Singh.
[5] Gurdial Singh's *Anne Ghore da Daan* (1975) translated as *Alms in the Name of a Blind Horse* (2016) by Rana Nayar.

coherence within the text. While there may be a range of translation choices available to a translator, it is important to justify and correspond these choices with the writer's intentions and the broader context of the work.

Omission can be a valid strategy in translation. According to Eugene Nida "there are cases where omission is required to avoid redundancy and awkwardness and this strategy is particularly applied if the source language tends to be a redundant language" (Nida 1964: 228). Thus, omission used to present the information in a concise manner is acceptable. However, it is important for the translator to ensure that the essential meaning and message of the original text are not lost in the process of omission. In the handbook of the Charted Institute of Linguists (which trains professional translators) it is mentioned that "translation with 5% or more of the source text missing will automatically be awarded a fail mark" (CIOL 2017: 9).

It is common for Punjabi-English literary translators to omit sections of the original text, especially if they are deemed difficult or problematic to translate. In the early 20th century, Charles Fredrick Usborne translated Waris's Heer as *The Adventures of Hir and Ranjha* (1905). In her analysis of Usborne's translation, Suzanne McMahon commented that "he skipped some of the more difficult sections of Hir, and the version contains many mistranslations" (Mcmohan xx). Similarly, in his translation of Heer, first published in the late 90s, Sant Singh Sekhon also omitted many sections.

According to Mona Baker, a renowned translation scholar, omission in translation can occur in different forms. The first form is the omission of a word or an expression. This happens when a translator intentionally or unintentionally skips a word or an expression from the source text while translating it into the target language. The second form is the omission of idioms, which can be challenging to translate since they are unique to a particular language and culture. A translator may choose to omit idioms to avoid confusion or mistranslation. The third form of omission, as described by Baker, is the omission of information in the content. This occurs when a translator leaves out crucial information from the preceding text while translating it into the receiving language. Such

omissions can significantly impact the meaning of the text and lead to a misinterpretation of the original work. When analysing *The Skeleton* (2017), an English translation of Amrita Pritam's *Pinjer* (1950), it becomes apparent that all three forms of omission have occurred in the text. The translator has omitted certain words and expressions from the source text and has also left out some idioms. Furthermore, a complete chapter has been omitted, which raises questions about the quality of the translation. The omission of a complete chapter in a literary work is a severe form of omission and can have a profound impact on the reader's understanding and interpretation of the text. However, it is important for translators to justify their omissions and provide a clear rationale for why certain sections were omitted. Although omission can sometimes be an effective strategy in translation but it is important for translators to exercise caution and responsibility when omitting sections of the original text.

Translation of regional dialects is another problem in Punjabi-English literary translation. If the translator is not familiar with the dialect, it can lead to a loss of meaning, ambiguity, or even distortion of the original text. Hence, it is important for the translator to be proficient in both the source and target languages, as well as familiar with the regional dialects of Punjabi, to accurately translate the original text. For example, in *Alms in the Name of a Blind Horse* (2016), Rana Nayar renders the phrase "paharh wale paseon" as "from the direction of hills". The preceding text *Anne Ghore da Daan* (1975) is written in Malwai, a dialect of Punjabi in which the phrase "paharh vale paseon" is actually used in the sense of "north direction". However, in Gurdial Singh: Sandharabh Kosh (2014), Tarsem Singh has compiled a list of Malwai words and phrases used by Gurdial Singh in his fiction, which can be a valuable resource for translators seeking to accurately capture the nuances of the original text. This demonstrates the importance of considering the cultural and linguistic context of the source language when translating literature.

Form of the preceding text poses a challenge to any translator who has to negotiate the onerous task of preserving the artistic beauty and rendering the sense in the receiving language. Translators have

responsibilities towards the preceding text; the freedom they exercise should be in order to extend the meaning of the text. Kafka calls Milena Jesenska's translations "faithful". It means they are faithful to the form, tone, and seemingly eccentric sentence and paragraph length i.e. to what Milan Kundera calls the "author's personal style" (Woods 2013: 16-18). But, sometimes form demands change in translation. Take two versions of Avatar Pash's Poem "laṛhē hōē varatamān dē rū-b-rū" to understand the importance of form.

ਲੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਰੂ-ਬ-ਰੂ
ਮੈਂ ਅਖ਼ਬਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਡਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।
ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਤੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਤੇ
ਕੁੱਝ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਛਪੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ
ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ, ਜਾਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਵੋ
ਕਿ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਭਿਆਨਕ ਹੈ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਕੁੱਝ ਨਾ ਹੋਣਾ
ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਫ਼ਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ
ਤੇ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਚੁੱਪ-ਚਾਪ ਲੇਟੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਠੰਢੀ ਔਰਤ ਵਾਂਗ-
(Pash 2015: 161)

Face to Face with the Fought-Out Present

(1) I am much afraid of newspapers these days
There must be in them somewhere the news
That nothing has happened whatever
You may not know, perhaps, or you may also know
How terrible it is 'happening nothing whatever'
The constant panting of sight
And things lying mum, like a frigid woman-
(Mohi 1992: 46)

Face to Face with the Time Fought For

(2) newspapers frighten me so much
these days
I fear
they must be carrying
somewhere
the news

of nothing
having happened
maybe you don't know
but perhaps you do
how terrifying it is
when nothing happens
the eyes
breathless panting
run up and down
not able to stop
and things lie inert
like a woman cold…
(Sharma 2023: 96)

The English translations differ in terms of form and tone. The first version is a close translation, whereas deviation in form in the second version brings the reader to the inherent core of the poem or the poet's intention. To present a Punjabi poem in English while keeping the rhythm and tone close to the original text, the translator may need to make necessary changes. The pauses in translation force the reader to think and understand the meaning of the poem. The translator is like a chained artist who chooses words, sounds, and syntactical structure based on the cultural, textual, and historical context of the poem.

Translation and interpretation are not separate activities. A person can make sense of a text but to rewrite or recode it in another language one needs exceptional interpretive and writing skills. It does not mean that translators must also be creative writers, but translation at its best demands creativity. Walter Benjamin rejects the idea that only a poet can best translate poetry; he cites the instances of Martin Luther, Johann Heinrich Voss and August Wilhelm Schlegel, who "are incomparably more important as translators than as creative writers." In the words of Benjamin "the task of the translator is distinct from the task of the poet" (Benjamin 2002: 258). The poet selects a particular form and content to write a poem. He negotiates between imagination and concepts.

Translators have to take certain decisions when the meter, rhyme scheme, sound, tone, form and metaphors used by the poet are not available or have different association in the culture of the

succeeding text. It is the responsibility of the translator to preserve the beauty, power and essence of the preceding text. It is this peculiar responsibility which distinguishes the translator from the author of a literary work. A.K. Ramanujan considers a case of poetry in translation, "translations are transpositions, reenactments, interpretations" and "nothing less than a poem can translate another" (qtd in Mehrotra 2019: 10). He acknowledges that translations are not exact replicas of the original, but rather interpretations that involve transpositions and reenactments of various elements. Some elements, such as language-bound meter, may be impossible to convey in translation. However, Ramanujan suggests that it is still possible to convey a sense of the original rhythm and levels of diction. He also notes that textures are harder to translate than structure, linear order more difficult than syntax, and lines more difficult than larger patterns. Poetry is created at all of these levels, and therefore, translation must also address these different levels. Ramanujan contends that successful translation of poetry necessitates the talent and sensibility of a poet and that a poem is the only viable medium to translate another poem.

Punjabi-English literary translation presents a range of challenges that need to be carefully considered by translators. These challenges include linguistic differences, cultural nuances, regional dialects, and the translator's subjective interpretation of the original text. Translators need to be well-versed in the source and target languages, as well as the cultures from which they originate. They must also have a strong grasp of the principles of translation and be able to make difficult choices regarding language, style, and tone.

Conclusion

Translation theory and constructive discussions are the most required and yet absent parts in the field of Punjabi-English literary translation. As an academic discipline "translation studies" focusses on both the theory and the practice of translation. Susan Bassnett writes that it examines the translation's influence on the formation of a literary canon, the methods used by translators, the prevailing norms during a specific period, the discussions among translators, the challenges in assessing the impact of translations, and, more

recently, the dilemma of establishing an ethical framework for translation are all significant aspects to consider (Bassnett 2002: 4).

Various organisations have also been established to study the challenges before translators, to resolve the vexing issues, to promote research in the field of translation and to produce resources and tools for translation such as bilingual and multilingual dictionaries and translation software. The European Society for Translation Studies, American Translation and Interpreting Studies Association, National Translation Mission of India and many other organisations aim to systematically promote translation. The training of translators at various levels is also a part of this effort.

Creating a theoretical foundation for Punjabi-English literary translation is crucial, taking into account the intricacies of both languages and cultures in question. This framework plays a vital role in tackling the difficulties encountered by translators, including the identification of suitable counterparts for culturally specific ideas or idiomatic phrases. Moreover, engaging in critical conversations about the translated works, aids in assessing the efficacy of the translation and its influence on the intended readership. Through the exploration and refinement of a theoretical and critical framework, the quality of Punjabi-English literary translation can be enhanced.

References

BAKER, MONA. 1992. *In Other Words*. London & New York: Routledge.

BASSNETT, SUSAN. 2002. *Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge.

BENJAMIN, WALTER. 2002. The Task of the Translator. In M. Bullock & M.W. Jennings (Eds.), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, Volume 1 (pp. 253-263). Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

BHULLAR, GURBACHAN SINGH. 2020. *Kalam-Siahi* [in Punjabi]. New Delhi: Navyug Publishers.

CASANOVA, PASCAL. 2004. *The World Republic of Letters*. (M.B. DeBevoise, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

CATFORD, J. C. 1965. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: Oxford University Press.

COOK, GUY. 2003. *Applied Linguistics*. London: Oxford University Press.

DAMROSCH, DAVID. 2003. *What is World Literature?* New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

DAMROSCH, DAVID. 2014. Translation and National Literature. In Sandra Bermann and Catherine Porter (Eds.), *A Companion to Translation Studies.* 347–360. doi:10.1002/9781118613504.ch26.

DAVIS, LYDIA. 2021. *Essays 2*. UK: Penguin Random House.

GILL, TEJWANT SINGH. (Ed.). 2005. *Sant Singh Sekhon: Selected Writings*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

GOETHE, JOHN WOLFGANG. 2002. Notes and Queries for a Better Understanding of West-Eastern Divan. In Jörg Waltje (Trans.), *Other Voices*, 2(2). Accessed online: http://www.othervoices.org/ 2.2/waltje/.

Handbook for Candidates. 2017. CIOL Educational Trust. Accessed online:https://www.ciol.org.uk/sites/default/files/DipTransSeminar2009 ChineseEnglish.pdf.

JAIN, JASBIR. (Ed.). 2011. *Sant Singh Sekhon: English Writings*. Patiala: Publication Bureau, Punjabi University.

MACAULIFFE, MAX ARTHUR. 1909. *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MCMAHON, SUZANNE. *Waris Shah's Hir-Ranjha*. Accessed online: https://usbornefamilytree.com/hir&ranjha.htm.

MEHROTRA, A. K. 2019. *Translating the Indian Past and Other Literary Histories*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.

MOHI, HARI SINGH. 1992. *Pash: An Anthology*. Amritsar: Ravi Publishers.

MUNDAY, JEREMY. 2001. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge.

NIDA, EUGENE. 1962. *Towards a Science of Translation*. Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher.

PASH. 2002. *Sampooran Pash Kaav* [*The Complete Poetry of Pash*]. Pash Memorial Trust.

PRITAM, AMRITA. 1950. *Pinjer* [in Punjabi, 2017]. Delhi: Shree Parkashan.

PRITAM, AMRITA. 2017. *The Skeleton*. (Khushwant Singh, Trans.). New Delhi: Dynamic Publications.

RODE, AJMER. *The Last Flicker*. Accessed online: https://ajmerrode.com/?page_id=1830.

SHARMA, RAJESH. 2023. *Pash and Dil: Critical Essays and Poems in Translation*. Patiala: Autumn Art.

SINGH, AVADHESH KUMAR. 2016. Translation Studies in the 21st Century. In Rana Nayar et al. (Eds.), *Dialogue Across Languages:*

Theory & Practice of Translation in India. Chandigarh: Publication Bureau, Panjab University.
SINGH, GURDIAL. 1964. *Marhi da Deeva* [in Punjabi, 2017]. Chandigarh: Lokgeet Parkashan.
SINGH, GURDIAL. 1975. *Anne Ghore da Daan* [in Punjabi, 2020]. Ludhiana: Chetna Parkashan.
SINGH, GURDIAL. 2010. *The Last Flicker*. (Ajmer Rode, Trans.). New Delhi: National Book Trust.
SINGH, GURDIAL. 2016. *Alms in the Name of a Blind Horse*. (Rana Nayar, Trans.). New Delhi: Rupa Publications.
SINGH, KARANJIT. 1975. *Punjabi Anuvaad de 25 saal* [in Punjabi]. *Punjabi Dunia*, Patiala: Bhasha Vibhaag.
SINGH, RAJINDER. (Ed.). 1987. *Punjabi Dunia: Anuvaad Vishesh Ank* [in Punjabi]. Patiala: Bhasha Vibhaag Punjab.
SINGH, SIKANDER. (Ed.). 2016. *Hardilbagh Singh di Sirjana te Anuwad Kala* [in Punjabi]. Ludhiana: Aesthetics Publications.
SINGH, TARSEM. 2014. Gurdial Singh de Sahit di Shabadawali [in Punjabi]. *Gurdial Singh: Sandharbh Kosh*. Patiala: Publication Bureau, Punjabi University.
SINGH, TEJA. 1980. *Arsi* [in Punjabi]. Patiala: Punjabi University.
TRUMP, ERNEST. 1877. *Ādi Granth or The Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs*. London: W.M. H. Allen & Co.
USBORNE, CHARLES FREDRICK. 1905. *The Adventures of Hir and Ranjha*. Accessed online: https://fid4sa-repository.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/246/1/hir.pdf.
WOODS, MICHELLE. 2017. *Kafka Translated: How Translators have Shaped Our Reading of Kafka*. India: Bloomsbury Academic.

***

About the author

Kulveer Kaur

Kulveer Kaur is a research scholar at the Department of English, Punjabi University, Patiala (Punjab).
Email: kaurkulveer32[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Cite this Work:

Kaur, Kulveer. 2023. Punjabi-English Literary Translation: Challenges and Possibilities. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 135-152.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ar7

Interviews

Translating the Margins: An Interview with V. Ramaswamy-the Translator Spy

UTSARGA GHOSH & UMESH KUMAR

V. Ramaswamy (b.1960) is a non-fiction writer and literary translator based in Kolkata. Since 1984, he has been working as an activist for the rights of labouring poor in his home city. Consequently, Ramaswamy's non-fiction foregrounds themes that are related to the life of workers, squatters, health and sanitation, poverty, slums, resettlement, and so on –from the grassroots. However, the main concern in this dialogic article is to trace Ramaswamy's journey as a translator of the marginal and suppressed voices. Since 2005, Ramaswamy is continuously engaged in 'committed' translations of Subimal Misra – a Bangla anti-establishment, experimental and maverick writer. For the uninitiated, trials and tribulations of the downtrodden and the suppressed primitive desires of the human psyche are the prominent themes in Misra's literary ecosystem. Courtesy of Ramaswamy's masterful translations, already spanning three volumes, Misra has acquired a new life –an 'afterlife' in the English world. Besides Misra, Ramaswamy has also translated other noted Bangla writers such as Manoranjan Byapari, Adhir Biswas, and Shahidul Zahir. But again, the connecting link among all these writers is their concerns and empathy for the margins that Ramaswamy has tapped. The conversation seeks to ask and answer, though not limited to: what is it to translate the margins? What is the role of a translator during such transactions? What strategies does a translator employ while negotiating complex narratives pertaining to the margins? Can a translator be called a 'cultural spy'?

In addition to the questions posed above, the conversation explores the possibilities inherent in collaborative translations, and the necessity to take the local (Bangla) to the global (English). Further, the discussion grounds how the recovery of local narratives in English translations vis-à-vis Bangla brings 'new' knowledge and makes a strong case to address questions of identity, violence, caste,

DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.in1 Translation Today, Volume 17, Issue 1

sexuality, and marginality in the periphery of the post-colonial nation like India. The conversation will be valuable source material for scholars and practitioners of translation and a working template for those working in/with the margins, especially in the south Asian context.

Utsarga Ghosh (UG) and Umesh Kumar (UK): Mr. Ramaswamy, how and when did you enter the field of translation?

V. Ramaswamy (VR): My entry into translation was accidental, and serendipitous. My awareness regarding Bangla literature was almost zero. All my reading from my childhood onwards was in English, i.e. fiction and literature, and non-fiction, in the English language, or in English translation. As I was never a student of Literature, my reading was entirely for pleasure and for learning, and extremely eclectic. However, notwithstanding my ignorance regarding Bangla literature, I was intimately connected with Bengali society, culture, history and politics. That was occasioned by my entry into public activism in 1984, through involvement in the movement[1] against squatter evictions in Calcutta, which began the process of my making common cause with the downtrodden and oppressed folk of my city (Golden Gandhi "P.S. Section"). That process culminated in my establishing a grassroots organisation in a century-old jute worker's settlement in Howrah, of mostly Muslim, Urdu-speaking labouring people, and mentoring the youth of the community towards awareness, capabilities and leadership for community advancement.

In 2005, my friend Mrinal Bose[2] casually mentioned the name of Subimal Misra to me, and that's when I heard it for the first time. For no reason at all, I responded saying I would translate him. After that he kept prodding and pushing me to begin. So I bought some of Misra's books, and on the day of Dashami – the last day of Durga

[1] During 1980s, the future of squatters in Calcutta was at stake due to the initiation of an eviction drive by the state government. In 1984, Chhinnamul Sramajibi Adhikar Samiti or Organization for the Rights of Uprooted Labouring People was established in protest and resistance against evictions.

[2] Dr. Mrinal Bose is a physician and novelist who lives in Sukchar, in the northern fringe of Kolkata.

Puja – that year, I picked up the Bangla volume *Anti-Golpo Songroho* or Anti-Story Collection (1999) and read and then translated the first story – Haran Majhi (Chandra). And thus I began reading his 'anti-stories' – and simultaneously translating them. I also gathered all the books by and about him that I could. I was truly fortunate that Misra entertained me, a complete stranger, and gave me his consent. Perhaps the fact that I was a Tamilian, and his discovery of my make-up and something about me in the course of our subsequent conversations (entirely over the phone), intrigued and tickled him! Reading Misra was an entirely new experience for me. It was like the opening up of a new horizon, of hitherto unimagined dimensions. His use of cinematic techniques like montage, jump shot, or collage in literary texts, for instance; or his internalization of literary masters like Cervantes, Dostoyevsky, Joyce, Proust, or Mann, endowing him with kaleidoscopic knowledge – amazed me. I thought Misra ought to be known beyond Bangla as well. That was the beginning of my initiation into the Subimal Misra translation journey (Ramaswamy).

UG and UK: You have been translating for close to two decades now. How do you view your journey as a translator so far? You must have gone through a certain transition in terms of selection of texts and the strategies you employed in rendering them into English?

VR: I rarely do anything by plan or strategy in my life! Things happen. The same applies to translation as well, I just do it spontaneously, but now there is also a reflexivity. Looking back, I see my journey as a translator unfolding through a few stages. In the initial period, this was just something interesting that I was doing, occasionally, on the side. That culminated in the publication of Misra's *The Golden Gandhi Statue from America: Early Stories* (2010). But by then, my interest in Misra's work had deepened, and I wanted to continue. I was selected for the Sangam House writers' residency in Bangalore in early 2011, and that heralded the second phase of my journey as a translator. Actually, soon after I began translating Misra, I read Michael Hofmann's essay "My Life with Roth". Hofmann was the translator of Joseph Roth, the Austrian

writer. That planted seeds in my mind of a long-term Subimal Misra translation project (Hofmann). So now I was no longer an incidental translator but a serious one, and I began a multi-volume project of selecting and translating Misra's short fiction, covering his entire writing life. During this phase, I translated *Wild Animals Prohibited*, published in 2015, and *This Could Have Become Ramayan Chamar's Tale: Two Anti-Novels*, which came out in 2019. The third phase of my evolution as a translator was triggered by a personal tragedy, the death of my son Rituraj in 2013, at age 21. Translation turned out to be the means whereby I was able to combat chronic depression, which threatened to hurl me into the abyss. I was working on editing the final manuscript for the third Misra book then, and following that I began the fourth Misra book. Translation for me was a means of shutting the mind, and concentrating on words, meaning, and syntax, something akin to meditation (Wild Animals 234).

While working on the fourth and final Subimal Misra volume, I began thinking about which author I ought to take up now. I had also come to view myself as a translator of 'voices from the margins', and so it was with such antennae that I now moved (The Nemesis). And thus I established contact with Manoranjan Byapari, and in early 2016 he gave me his epic novel, *Chandal Jibon*, to translate. That was translated into two volumes, *The Runaway Boy* (2020) and *The Nemesis* (forthcoming). It was while working on *Chandal Jibon* that I had my first experience of unending labour, which must be the true test of a translator. I had joked about this to friends, saying it was like being asked by someone to start walking from Kolkata, and he would meet me in Delhi! Or like digging a pit endlessly! But I persisted, because I had committed myself to the work and so I had to see it through. This was the fourth stage of my journey as a translator.

Meanwhile, Adhir Biswas, an editor, publisher and writer, had requested me to translate his prize-winning book, *Allahr Jomite Paa* (*Setting Foot on Allah's Land*). I began working on that in mid-2018, and then it turned out that the book was the first of a 4-part series, so I took up the subsequent three books as well in 2019. These books are a refugee's remembrance, of his lost village in East

Pakistan, and his poverty-stricken family's struggles to eke out a living and gain a toehold in the new country, India. Adhir Biswas' four books were published as a single volume, *Memories of Arrival: A Voice from the Margins*, in 2022. Once again, I had committed myself to the work, and so I had to see it through. My apprenticeship in unremitting labour served me well in this respect! (Modi).

In 2019, once again by sheer dint of circumstances, I was introduced to the name and work of the Bangladeshi writer, Shahidul Zahir. And soon after that, I lived for a fortnight in his books! Zahir was the first Bangla writer I read for the sheer joy of reading, the very first sentence of his magical prose that I read had me ensnared (Life and Political 1). That led to my beginning a three-volume project of translating Zahir. I like to think that this was my destiny, for in working on Zahir I entered the next, *zen* phase of translation, where there is no effort, only being and unfolding. The Zahir project also inaugurated for me the practice of collaboration in translation. I invited Shahroza Nahrin, a graduate student with an interest in translation, to join me in translating Shahidul Zahir's novella, *Life and Political Reality*. That was a happy and rich experience, and led to my realisation of another basic axiom in translation, that two is better than one. Shahroza and I then worked on another novella by Zahir, *Abu Ibrahim's Death*, and the book, *Life and Political Reality: Two Novellas* was published in 2022. With Shahroza preoccupied with her graduate studies at McGill University, I completed two more books of Zahir in 2021-22, a collection of ten short stories by him, and his novel, *I See the Face*. Both are forthcoming in 2022. After reading Zahir, I also initiated an engagement with Bangladesh, and have made regular visits there. The publication of three Zahir books in my translation in 2022 is my way of paying homage to the memory of Bangladesh's historic independence.

I continued with collaborative translation, and through 2021 I worked with Labani Jangi to translate *The Song of the Faraway Village* (*Goi-Geramer Panchali*), by Ansaruddin. The author is a marginal farmer from Nadia district, in West Bengal – we are contemporaries – and he has been writing since 1990. I heard him speak at the People's Literary Festival in Kolkata in 2018, and then

established contact with him, and he gave me this book to translate, a collection of five essays, that looks at the rural Muslim life and milieu in West Bengal, and the transformations therein since the author's childhood – a subject mostly absent in literary production in West Bengal. Working with Labani was also a very satisfying experience. The work was difficult in parts, demanding patience and persistence. But we saw it through. A leading publisher will be bringing the book out in the near future.

In July 2021, I learnt the name of the writer Ismail Darbesh and his first novel, *Talashnama* from an article written by a friend. The author is from a family of *ostagars,* or garment-makers. Ismail handles the marketing aspect of the family business – and writes. I obtained his novel and proposed it to my publisher, who agreed at once. I will begin work on that soon.

As I mentioned earlier, it was the Sangam House residency that made me a literary translator. And I have been fortunate to attend a few other residencies as well. I was at Ledig House in the USA in 2015, at the Toji Cultural Centre in Korea in 2015 and again in 2019, at Aberystwyth University in Wales in 2016, and was hosted by the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh (ULAB) in Dhaka in 2020. I was able to advance in my translation work only because of these residencies (Wild Animals xi).

The identity that I now profess is that of a translator. But I also have another identity, I look after my family business, a small engineering factory. If not for this enterprise, started by my late father in 1967, with which I began my engagement in the early 2000s, I would not have been in the situation of taking up and then devoting myself assiduously to translating Bangla voices from the margins. It enabled me to become an independent translator. Similarly, a person who is driven to do such things would definitely pose a challenge to his next-of-kin, or spouse. So, my translation practice also owes to my wife's unstated support (Mokashi-Punekar 164).

UG and UK: Misra is difficult to read even for the Bangla readers. How difficult /easy has been to render him into English? Did your own identity as a Tamil migrant in Bengal play any role in these transactions?

VR: Subimal Misra is not an easy writer. The kind of allusions and intertextuality that one encounters in his works pose a humongous challenge. In other words, a 'total' Subimal Misra reader, if at all, would be a special creature. Naturally, the problem of/in reading is also the problem that one encounters when one attempts to translate him. My reading was always carried with a translator's lens. My method of translating Subimal has always been from the vantage point of words and sentences, language and popular meaning (Mokashi-Punekar 168).

I am neither a scholar of literature, nor a scholar of translation studies. I am just a reader of literature, and when it comes to translation, it is 'language' that I engage with, not 'literature'. I mean I try to 'understand', transparently, what something means, what it is that is being said, while also observing 'how' it is said, what kind of word is being used, what kind of speech is employed, what, for instance, is the sociological dimension (Two Anti-novels x).

As much of Subimal's writing deals with people on the margins and their plight, a translator also needs to distance himself from the elitist Bengali mindset and get deeply involved with an alternative Bengali culture and language associated with the downtrodden (Velayudhan 170). To put it differently, it would be difficult and frustrating for someone to translate Subimal with only a rudimentary knowledge of Bangla. There are different dialects of Bengal[3] and Bengali language (173).

[3] Sukumar Sen and Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, two of the greatest linguists and historians of Bengali language, have broadly classified Bengali language into six dialects according to their regional usage variation. They are: Bangali, Rarhi, Varendri, Rangpuri, Manbhumi, and Sundarbani. However, there are dozens of local variations that exist within the above mentioned standardized dialects. For example, the dialect that Subimal often uses in his texts is called Dokkhina Bhasa, or Dokhni, a variant spoken in South Twenty-four Parganas district of West Bengal, the native place of a large section of Kolkata's labouring population.

The translator must be embedded and alien at the same time, and thereby enable discernment and comprehension on the part of the 'foreign' reader. That is how I see it. As it happens, I am such an insider-outsider, on account of being a Tamil in Bengal. When it comes to Bangladesh, another dimension comes in, and as someone from West Bengal and India, everything seems new and different to my eyes and ears, which prompts thinking, and brings questions, conjecture and speculation to mind regarding 'people', 'history' and 'culture'. And the key thing about Bangladesh is language. There are so many dialects, or local speeches, we should actually call them languages. Each language has its own sensibility, its own verve and pungency. Just like India is not one but multiple nations, Bengali in Bangladesh is not one but multiple languages. There is so much for writers to explore and experiment with, and likewise, so much for translators to do (Sarkar 205).

I am like a permanent spy in the Bengali world. Outsider, by ethnicity; insider by long standing geographical proximity and intimacy, married to a Bengali, fluent in the language, conscious of the historical, political, social, cultural, religious etc, always engaging with my environment, my city, its people; and so, always observing.

I see a huge transformation between the person I was and the translator that I have become between 2005 to 2022. This evolution has happened not only inside but also in the working approach that I have developed. In order to translate Subimal, I need to wear multiple hats, such as that of an anthologist, researcher, anthropologist, sociologist, besides being a translator (Wild Animals 222). It is because I am deeply embedded in life-culture in West Bengal, and owing to my activist engagement with my city that I translate. It is an act of translating culture; it is an activist's engagement.

My grandfather's job brought him to Calcutta in 1930, he was from the Tamil-speaking community in Kerala. However, as migrants, I recall distinctively that my family always reserved a deep respect for Bengali culture and tradition. For them, Bengal was a promised land, and they looked at it with awe and respect. Furthermore, my interest in social activism and subsequent marriage

into a Bengali family made me an almost-equal Bengali among native Bengalis. Now, moving to the literary front, more particularly with respect to writings in the Bengali language, publications, circulation, and the reading habits of the Bengali public, I began to realize that contemporary Bengali readership has little idea with regards to what is going on beyond commercial and canonical writers in Bangla. The alternative voices from the Bangla literary sphere that have hitherto been kept at the periphery for various reasons, need to be shared. Thus, when authors like Subimal, Manoranjan, Biswas or Zahir are available in English translation, they are as much a matter of discovery to the Bangla readership as it is to the outside world (Anantha Murthy 180). I see this discovery as a great reward for a translator.

UG and UK: Did you employ some specific strategies while translating Misra? What are the negotiations that you made with the original Bangla texts? Do you mind sharing some examples or anecdotes?

VR: Every translator has his/her own way of negotiating with the source text. I will share a few instances of those negotiations:

While translating Misra's story "Swaramelakalanidhi" (The Treasured Art of Vocal Harmony), I faced a peculiar problem. For some reasons, I couldn't tap the source inspiration that Subimal might have had while writing that story. However, a few months after I had submitted my manuscript to the publisher for the last Subimal volume, I attended an Indology lecture in Bangalore. While discussing temple architecture in Hampi, in Karnataka, a French Indologist mentioned the Sanskrit text, *Swaramelakalanidhi*[4]. While attending that lecture, I came to know how much this Sanskrit text has influenced Subimal. The incident left me both baffled and elated. Had I not attended the lecture, I would never have known that Subimal knew about these classical musical texts too!

[4] Written by Ramamataya in the year 1550, Swaramelakalanidhi is a treatise on Vijayanagara musicology from the Post-Sangita Ratnakara period of South Indian music history. It is considered to be one of the most celebrated texts among Sangita Shastra Navaratnas of Carnatic Music theory.

Another major challenge for a translator is how and to what extent he is able to deal with the ambiguities of the source text. Dr. Mrinal Bose acted as a reviewer for the early drafts of my translation. It was he, who mentioned to me the name of Elfriede Jelinek, the Nobel Prize winning Austrian writer, as someone whose work resembled that of Subimal.

Translators might be doing their negotiations at multiple levels simultaneously. Like preparing a translation proposal, doing sample translations, going through the copy-editing or proofs from the publisher, editorial reviews of submitted translations etc. But translators like me also depend on a circle of family and friends. My aunts read some of my translations and made comments. A fellow-blogger friend painstakingly edited some of my early work. Friends keep me abreast about writers to look out for (Wild Animals 221).

What I'm trying to say is that a translator ought to be resourceful, imaginative and enterprising. He should keep his ears and eyes open. He ought to be receptive to any information that might help him render the text in the best possible manner. By the way, these shared ways of doing translation also shatter the myth that translation is an activity to be undertaken in isolation!

UG and UK: **Do you ever seek a qualitative assessment of your translation output?**

VR: Yes, I am always keen to receive critical feedback on my work. I send my work to people and solicit comments. But I also do not want to impose on anyone. Translation practitioners know that there is no perfect translation (Mokashi-Punekar 164). You can always improve upon a translation. To be honest, I have found errors in some of my translations, which could have been avoided. Perhaps, nobody noticed them. In such cases, I have requested the publisher to rectify them in subsequent editions. In *When Color is a Warning Sign* (1984/2019), Subimal quotes a few lines[5] from Bishnu De's

[5] Misra, Subimal. "When Colour is a Warning Sign". Two Anti-Novels, Harper Perennial, 2019, pp. 210.

poetry[6]. Even after repeated review and editing, I had missed an error in the poetry translation, and I noticed that in the final proof. I discussed those lines with a couple of poets in English who were Bengali. It is possible for a translator to be ignorant at one stage and wiser at the other. Translation is thus a continuous movement from ignorance to awareness.

UG and UK: Even a cursory look at your translation repertoire informs that you have been interested in a particular brand of writing. Do you also feel that? Is there a commonality in Subimal, Byapari, Adhir and Zahir?

VR: This question of yours makes me think about my own translation choices. As I said, I saw myself as translating voices from the margins, and these writers may be seen in those terms. Subimal deliberately stayed at the periphery, by choice, throughout his writing life, and sought to demolish all the canons of what is considered 'writing'. Byapari was a marginal man by birth and by dint of his life circumstances – like being a rickshaw-puller, and later a cook – but his will to survive and overcome saw him attain glory and renown. Biswas, the son of a barber and a refugee, was defined by marginality for much of his life, which he embraced as his identity and retained even after having accomplished literary and publishing success. He is a keeper of subaltern memory. Zahir too, like Misra, chose to remain at the periphery, as far as the literary scene was concerned, and in his writing he looks at the common folk of his country. Even the writing of Ansaruddin[7], who writes about the lives of rural Muslims in West Bengal, has been mostly unknown until recently. So translation critics might perhaps like to term me as a translator of the margins.

[6] Bishnu Dey (1909-1982) is a Calcutta based Marxist Bengali poet from the post-Tagore era. A founding member of the Anti-Fascist Writers' and Artists' Association (1947), he won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1966 and Jnanpith Award in 1971.

[7] Ansaruddin is a marginal farmer from Nadia district. He is best known for his novel, *Go Rakhaler Kothokota* (2015).

UG and UK: According to you, what are the major challenges that an independent translator encounters in the field of Indian translation? What is your opinion about the prospects of commissioned translation here?

VR: A potential (Indian) translator needs to have mastery over English and an equally strong footing in at least one Indian language – if one aspires to connect our local with the global and vice versa (Kumar 203). Besides, like any other good translator, s/he should possess a continuous learning orientation, openness to improvement, and an ethic of excellence. From such standards, it would seem, then, that a translator ought to be an extremely alert reader of the text, unlike the common reader. It is unfortunate that Bhasha literatures do not have the number of translators commensurate with the quantity of literatures produced in the Bhashas. There are many who have read Misra but only a miniscule will try to translate that experience into English or in other Indian languages. The sheer labor behind translation might be one of the reasons.

At the same time, there are some other challenges that a translator has to deal with. Taking into account the translation environment in India, I believe, most of the translators are not independent translators. A governmental institution like Sahitya Akademi promotes translations from regional languages into English. The modus operandi of this body is to select translators and commission them for different projects. These are called commissioned translations. However, due to lack of market strategy, pre-publication promotions, or post- publication evaluation and circulation, these translators remain away from the reader's reach.

There is yet another problem one encounters frequently if one decides to be an independent translator. Let us imagine a translator decides to translate a non-canonical Indian author. One is inevitably faced with commercial suspicion and editorial queries. In the beginning, I had to patiently explain to my editor the powerful nature of Subimal Misra's literary repertoire. I am an independent translator. However, I do not demean the role of a commissioned translation as well. Having a translation is always better than not having one.

Most of all, it would be difficult for someone to make a living in India as a literary translator. So naturally, there would be very few people who are driven to translate because they must.

UG and UK: Is there a specific translation methodology you follow? What would be your suggestion for the budding translators who aspire to translate complex and challenging writers like Misra?

VR: During my earlier translations, I never felt the need for collaboration. However, while translating Shahidul Zahir, I collaborated with Shahroza Nahrin[8]. Having now been part of both solo and collaborative exercise in translation, I believe that collaboration is important. I think it would be a meaningful exercise more particularly in dealing with complex writers such as Misra.

I remember Keki Daruwalla[9] forbade me once from making word to word translation and recommended sense to sense instead. Nevertheless, as far as Subimal and Shahidul's texts are concerned, the translator shouldn't add or subtract anything of his/her own. These are highly evolved and crafted works of art. Therefore, you have to stretch the limits of English as much as possible to accommodate the style and idiosyncrasies of the original.

Rhetorically one can ask –is translation just a matter of rendering words into another language for which you can use Google Translate (internet) and a dictionary? We should keep in mind that we are translating a culture. Can one translate a culture with the rudimentary knowledge of the language? One should be deeply embedded in that culture as a participant and observer before attempting any translation. Otherwise it would be a fraud.

UG and UK: Do you mind giving a few more examples?

VR: *Madankatkati*[10] is the first story of the collection *Kath Khay Angra Hage* (Eat Wood Shit Charcoal) by Subimal. When I was in

[8] A Bangladeshi translator, studying in Canada.

[9] Keki N. Daruwalla (born 1937) is an Indian English poet and short story writer. He received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984 for his poetry collection *The Keeper of the Dead*.

[10] Madankatkati or Monakka is a famous snack of Bengal, made of flour.

Korea in 2015 and about to translate it, it came to my notice that he had changed the name of the story in another collection and published it as *Mahanirgronthiya* (The Great Renunciant). I misread it as *Mahanigranthiya* and it was much later that I discovered my error.

Let me share another experience. In the story *Calcutta Dateline*, there is a scene of an adivasi festival where someone is playing the Dhamsa[11]. An adivasi song is being sung in a frenzy of intoxication. While translating that piece, I was wearing just a gamchha (do we need to give a footnote on the meaning of Gamchha??) around my waist, and imagined the melody and beat to which the song was being sung, and began swaying to that beat – and rendered the English in that state. These are moments which can be called living in/through translation.

In another instance, *Kokire Lonang Korar Moto* (*Like Netting a Babe?*), Misra uses both Sadhu Bhasha[12] and Chalit Bhasha[13]. How do you render these two registers differently in translation? How do you render dialects? In the *Golden Gandhi Statue from America*, I tried to invent a pidgin for a dialect, which went terribly wrong. So the only creative response that I could think of now is to transcribe the dialect into Roman and reproduce it along with the English translation. In Shahidul Zahir's *Jibon O Rajnoitik* (*Life and Political Reality*), I provided Roman transcription and English translation to all the direct speeches, which are in Dhakai Bangla –a dialect of Bangladesh.

Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks to V. Ramaswamy for his patience and time. The recorded file of the interview is with Utsarga Ghosh.

[11] Dhamsa is a tribal musical instrument similar to drum.

[12] A sophisticated variation of Bengali, used by the upper class elites for writing literature. It consists of Sanskrit-derived vocabulary mostly.

[13] A variation of Bengali language, used for daily purposes by commoners. It consists of more recent and colloquial idioms.

References

Primary Sources

ANSARUDDIN. 2024. *The Song of the Faraway Village*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Forthcoming.

BISWAS, ADHIR. 2022. *Memories of Arrival*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). New Delhi: Sage.

BYAPARI, MANORANJAN. 2020. *The Runaway Boy*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Chennai: Eka.

DARBESH, ISMAIL. 2024. Talashnama, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Forthcoming.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2014. Madankatkati. In *Boi Songroho 4*. 213-228. Kolkata: Gangchil.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2014. Swaramelakalanidhi. In *Boi Songroho 4*. 319-364. Kolkata: Gangchil.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2015. Kokire Lonang Korar Moto. In *Boi Songroho* 6. 91- 152. Kolkata: Gangchil.

ZAHIR, SHAHIDUL. 2022. *Why There Are No Noyontara Flowers in Agargaon Colony Stories*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). India: Harper Perennial.

ZAHIR, SHAHIDUL. 2023. *I See the Face*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). India: Harper Perennial.

Secondary Sources

ANANTHA MURTHY, U.R. 1991. Translation of Fiction: An Author's View. In Paniker, K. Ayyappa (Ed.), *Making of Indian Literature*. 177- 186. Chennai: Sahitya Akademi.

BYAPARI, MANORANJAN. 2023. *The Nemesis*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Chennai: Eka.

CHANDRA, NILAKANTHA. 2012. Becoming a Translator in Bengali. *Millennium Post*. Accessed online: http://www.millenniumpost.in/becoming-a-translator-of-bengali-9876

HOFMANN, MICHAEL. 2005. My Life with Roth. *The Guardian*. Accessed online: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2005/dec/31/featuresreviews.guardianreview20

KUMAR, UMESH. 2020. An Interview with Diptiranjan Pattanaik. *Translation Today*, 14(2). 201-210.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2010. *The Golden Gandhi Statue from America*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Thane: Harper Perennial.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2015. *Wild Animals Prohibited*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Noida: Harper Perennial.

MISRA, SUBIMAL. 2019. *Two Anti-Novels*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy). Noida: Harper Perennial.

MODI, CHINTAN GIRISH. 2023. Interview: V Ramaswamy. *Hindustan Times*. Accessed online: https://www.hindustantimes.com/books/interview-v-ramaswamy-i-want-to-rock-the-system-101683831854083.html

MOKASHI-PUNEKAR, SHANKAR. 1991. Limits of Translatibility. In Paniker, K. Ayyappa (ed.), *Making of Indian Literature*. 164- 166. Chennai: Sahitya Akademi.

MOKASHI-PUNEKAR, SHANKAR. 1991. Loss and Gain in Translation. In Paniker, K. Ayyappa (Ed.), *Making of Indian Literature*. 167- 169. Chennai: Sahitya Akademi.

RAMASWAMY, V. 2018. Subimal Misra's Anti-fiction. *Translation Tuesday*. Accessed online: https://www.asymptotejournal.com/blog/2018/12/11/translation-tuesday-subimal-misras-anti-fiction/

SARKAR, PABITRA. 1991. Problems of Translation from (and to) the South Asian Languages. In Paniker, K. Ayyappa (ed.), *Making of Indian Literature*. 202- 211. Chennai: Sahitya Akademi.

VELAYUDHAN, S. 1991. Translation of Fiction: A Translator's View. In Paniker, K. Ayyappa (Ed.), *Making of Indian Literature*. 170- 176. Chennai: Sahitya Akademi.

ZAHIR, SHAHIDUL. 2022. *Life and Political Reality*, (Trans. V. Ramaswamy and Shahroza Nahrin). India: Harper Perennial.

***

About the Authors

Utsarga Ghosh
Utsarga Ghosh is an independent researcher from Banaras Hindu University.
Email: utsargaprl[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Umesh Kumar
Umesh Kumar is a literary critic and he teaches in the Department of English at Banaras Hindu University.
Email: umeshkumareng[AT]bhu[DOT]ac[DOT]in

Cite this Work:

Ghosh, Utsarga & Kumar, Umesh. 2023. Translating the Margins: An Interview with V. Ramaswamy-the Translator Spy. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 157-172.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.in1

Book Review

Modern Bengali Poetry:
Desire for Fire

SINHA, ARUNAVA. (trans.). 2021. *Modern Bengali Poetry*: *Desire for Fire*. Kolkata: BEE Books.

Reviewed by RIFAT ARA KHATUN &
H S KOMALESHA

Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire is a captivating anthology of contemporary Bengali poetry translated into English by Arunava Sinha, one of the most prolific and accomplished Bengali to English translators. This comprehensive volume of poetry celebrates with all earnestness the rich, vast and diverse Bengali poetry, featuring works by some of the most celebrated poets of the two historically significant Bengals – the eastern Indian state and the country of Bangladesh. Comfortably traversing the spectrum of life, ranging from tropes of love and longing to political and social issues, this collection offers a beautiful portrayal of the nuances and complexities of Bengali life and culture. Sinha's translations are classy and masterful, seamlessly capturing the essence of the original Bengali poems while making them accessible to non-Bengali readers from different cultural backgrounds. This review explores the various themes and styles of the poems in this collection, with a focus on the translator's remarkable ability to convey aesthetically elegant and complex Bengali poetry through English. While doing so, it delves into the significance of these works in the larger context of 'modern' poetry and the Bengali literary tradition, closely examining how this volume could be of relevance to readers of poetry from all over the world.

How does a translator, who is an interloper between two language-worlds, attempt to accommodate the creative voices of one on the imaginative canvas of another? If it involves translating poetry, what are the additional mitigating challenges a translator faces in order to temper the task at hand? Arunava Sinha's anthology attempts to seek answers to these crucial questions not directly but

DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.br1 Translation Today, Volume 17, Issue 1

through a discursive engagement with the craft of poetry first and then to come to a conscious understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the translator, especially in a linguistically vibrant and diverse society such as India. As it is a commonplace now, translating poetry is a complex and challenging task that requires not only a deep understanding of both the source and the target languages but also a sensitivity to the cultural and social contexts in which the source work is located. In fact, one of the foremost challenges of poetry translation is capturing the essence of the poem, which includes not only the meaning of the words but also its sound, rhythm, and imagery. In addition, the translator must also be able to convey the emotions and cultural references that are present in the source work while trying to adapt the poem to fit into the linguistic and cultural fabric of the target language.

In the case of Bengali poetry, the challenge is even greater, as the language is rich in metaphor and imagery, and the cultural context is deeply rooted in the history and traditions of Bengal. Sinha keeps the magic alive in each poem by keeping intact the intertextualities in his translations. Intertextualities "deepen the target reader's understanding of the norms and beliefs of the source culture" (Singh & Komalesha 169). For instance, while reading "Bonolata Sen" by Jibanananda Das, a curious reader would search for unfamiliar words, leading them to the *Mahabharata*. Translating poetry involves not only word-to-word translation but also the nuanced interpretation and effective communication of the poet's intended meaning and emotional expression. In this regard, Roman Jakobson writes: "Only creative transposition is possible: either intralingual transposition—from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transposition—from one language into another, or finally intersemiotic transposition—from one system of signs into another, e.g., from verbal art into music, dance, cinema, or painting" (Jakobson 1959: 118). The historical and cultural context of a source language might not always be readily familiar to native English speakers. In such cases, it may be necessary for translators to furnish supplementary text or annotations to facilitate readers' comprehension of the cultural and historical importance of the poem. However, the concerned collection does not provide any endnote or

footnote on understanding any poem. Nonetheless, Arunava Sinha's translations in *Modern Bengali Poetry*: *Desire for Fire* are a testament to his skill as a translator, as he is able to capture the essence of the original works while also making them accessible to a wider global audience.

As the "Translator's overture" indicates, Arunava Sinha as a translator is conscious of the challenges involved while bringing out a massive anthology of 'modern' Bengali poetry spanning more than a century with inclusion of more than fifty major Bengali poets such as Rabindranath Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Jibananda Das, Shankha Ghosh, Nabarun Bhattacharya, Humayun Azad, among others. While the term 'modern' as a temporal category in the title of the volume is in itself problematic, the translator resolves it by alluding more to its discursive value than to its historical one. However, the introduction to the collection serves as a comprehensive guide to the readers on modernism in Bengali poetry and the tenets of the movement and enlists modern Bengali poets– including the poets who fail to make their way into the collection. As if answering methodological questions concerning the selection of poets and poems in this volume, Arunava Sinha writes: "Consider this book something like a concert, in which a musician sings cover versions of their favorite songs, whose originals were written and performed over a vast span of time" (Sinha 2021: xv). What is truly remarkable in the volume and its choice of poets and poems is the way in which the translator captures "a diverse selection of voices, rhythms, idioms and styles in a way which allows every poem to breathe a life of its own" (Holborow 2021).

Aptly, Sinha begins his "manifest concert" with "Camellia", one of the most remarkable poems of the greatest Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore. This translation is indeed a testament to Sinha's genius as a translator because the translator's skillful word choices successfully evoke the hysteria, agony, and desire of a psychotic *amore*:

> "I tell myself, what if there's nothing between us
> She's a fellow-passenger at least.
> A pure intelligence

Seems to shine through her appearance
The hair swept back from her young forehead
Her bright eyes fearless." (Sinha 2021: 2).

In the poem, Tagore writes about a beautiful flower named Camelia, which he later compares to his love lost to the passage of time. In fact, the poem is a meditation on the transience of life and the pain of lost love. Sinha's translation of the poem is highly remarkable for its ability to capture the emotional depth and beauty of the original poem and how it manages to convey the sense of longing and pain present in the original work. While retaining the metaphorical language, symbolism, and imagery of the original work, the translation succeeds in capturing the emotional resonance of Tagore's original poem.

Continuing to capture the beauty of a woman who acts as a symbol of a bygone era that has faded away, Sinha turns his gaze on "Bonalata Sen" by Jibanananda Das. Here the poet describes a woman named Bonalata Sen, who he imagines living in a remote village in rural Bengal. The poem is a deep and engaging reflection on the transience of life. Sinha's translation of the poem is remarkable for its ability to capture the beauty and melancholy without losing the musicality of the original poem; through deploying repetition and alliteration, the translator beautifully recreates the poetic genius of Jibanananda Das.

In contrast to the poems of Tagore and Das that invoke the beauty and elegance of love and women, Sinha translates the radical poetry of Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose poetry instills revolutionary zeal in the young masses, especially among the students during India's struggle for Independence:

"When the revolution comes
We will lay down our lives
Within us weeps liberation
Of the centuries
We have all shed tears of glory
To fill our mothers' hearts
We are students, all" (Sinha 2021: 12).

As is evident through these lines, Sinha's translation of Nazrul Islam's poetry captures the raw energy and passion while retaining the sense of defiance and individuality that is present in the original poem. In order to build a sense of momentum and urgency the original poem encapsulates, Sinha retains and engages the repetitive structure of the source poem.

While it is said that much is lost in translation, the scope of the original text is significantly more extensive than what is lost. Translating Bengali poetry into English can present a formidable challenge, and translators may encounter a range of issues and difficulties, as "poetic language could be defined as the *non-translatable* language" (Nikolaou 2010: 130). The Bengali language possesses intricate and multifaceted characteristics culturally and linguistically distinct from English, lacking a direct counterpart in the latter. Bengali poetry frequently employs wordplay, idiomatic expressions, and figurative language, posing a challenge for translation. To effectively communicate the intended meaning and significance of the source poem, translators need to exercise their creative faculties and make strategic decisions. Translating a poem may also require translators to exercise subjective judgment in their interpretation and communication of the text, leading to the possibility of multiple translations and interpretations. Similar to what A K Ramanujan in his "Translator's Note" of *Speaking of Shiva* writes: "A translation has to be true to the translator no less than to the originals…Translation is choice, interpretation, an assertion of taste…" (Ramanujan 1973: xii-xiii).

Sinha's translations are occasionally hampered by the untranslatability of certain Bengali words and feelings as "the original text never reappears in the new language (this would be impossible), yet it is ever present" (Paz 1992: 155). In the first poem, "Camellia". Sinha interprets *sal patha* as the leafy box; in Bengal, the leaves of the *sal* tree or *Shorearobusta* are commonly used as a dish. The only way to convey it in English is to reduce it to a generic "leafy box" (Sinha 2021: 7), leaving it open-ended and up to the reader's interpretation. These omissions can only be comprehended by a reader who has a working knowledge of Bengali and English. Another example of untranslatability is the poem

"Come Back, Wheel: June 22, 1962" by Binoy Majumdar. The source text in Bangla is titled "Phire Esho, Chaka". and "chaka" may be easily translated as "wheel." However, Majumdar's objective behind using "chaka" was quite different. "Chaka" makes a brief reference to the surname "Chakraborty" and relates to the poet's adoration and devotion for Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Therefore, the literal translation of "chaka" as "wheel" completely deviates from the poem's original meaning and intent.

Despite a few shortcomings in translation, it is noteworthy that Sinha, in the majority of instances, retained Bengali proper nouns and did not domesticize Bengali-specific terms; for example, when translating Mandakranta Sen's poem "The Story of Arjun and Krishnachura". the names of the trees were retained. Through his selection and translation of each Bengali poet and their poems, Sinha enviably brings together their distinct voice and perspective to the collection, creating thus a rich tapestry of themes and ideas that reflect the complexities of modern Bengali life and culture. From the deeply personal and intimate to the political and social, the poems in this anthology capture the essence of modern Bengali poetry and provide a glimpse into the ongoing literary tradition of the region. Arunava Sinha's translation of these works is exceptional, as he skilfully navigates the nuances of Bengali language and culture to create an English version that maintains the depth and complexity of the original works while maintaining sight of how it is received in English. He does not shy away from capturing the essence of the Bengali ethos, and his translations are true to the essence of the poems, making them accessible to readers from different cultural backgrounds. Unambiguously, *Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire* is a collection that speaks to the universality of human experience while celebrating the unique perspectives of Bengali poets. Sinha's translations, in particular, capture the essence of these works in a way that resonates with readers from all over the world, making it an essential read for readers interested in contemporary poetry in general and the literary traditions of Bengal in particular.

References

GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANH VON. 2010. On World Literature. In Matthew Bell (Ed.), *The Essential Goethe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

HOLBOROW, NATALIE ANN. 2020. Modern Bengali Poetry. *Wales Arts Review*: *A Window on the Arts of Wales*. Accessed online: https://www.walesartsreview.org/books-modern-bengali-poetry-desire-for-fire/

JAKOBSON, ROMAN.1959/2000. On Linguistic Aspects of Translation. In Lawrence Venuti (Ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*. London & New York: Routledge.

NIKOLAOU, PASCHALIS. 2010. Eight Positions on the Translation of Poetry. In Richard Berengarten & Paschalis Nikolaou (Eds.), *The Perfect Order*. London: Anvil Press Poetry.

PAZ, OCTAVIO. 1992. Translation: Literature and Letters (Irene del Corral, Trans.). In John Biguenet & Rainer Schulte (Eds.), *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. 152-162. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Accessed online: https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226184821-016.

RAMANUJAN, A K. 1973. *Speaking of Siva*. India: Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd.

SINGH, NEELIMA & H S KOMALESHA. 2022. Re-organising Structures: Poetry Translation as Double Transgression. In I.A. Gazieva and A.A. Stolyarov (Eds.), *Actual Problems of Translation and Translation Studies in Russian and South Asian Languages*: *Materials of the II International Scientific and Practical Conference September* 29–30, 2021. 193-202. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities.

SINHA, ARUNAVA. 2021.*Modern Bengali Poetry*: *Desire for Fire*. Kolkata: BEE Books.

***

About the Authors

Rifat Ara Khatun
Rifat Ara Khatun is a doctoral candidate at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur.
Email: arakhatunrifat[AT]gmail[DOT]com

H S Komalesha
H S Komalesha is a Professor of English at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Kharagpur.
Email: komalesha[AT]hss[DOT]iitkgp[DOT]ac[DOT]in

Cite this Work:

Khatun, Rifat Ara & Komalesha, H S. 2023. Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire (Review of the book Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire, translated by Sinha, Arunava). *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 177-183.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.br1

Annotated Bibliography

An Annotated Bibliography of Select Translation Studies Books Published in 2022

JATINDER KUMAR

ABDUL-RAOF, H. 2022. *An Introduction to Arabic Translation: Translator Training and Translation Practice*. New York: Routledge.

This book combines theory and practice as it contains 22 exercises with discussion over various translation approaches. It is, as the title and subtitle hints, an intensive training for students and aspirants of Arabic to English and vice-versa translation and aims to provide them with insights into translation theories and practices. The book is divided into, apart from introduction, six chapters which are further divided into sub-parts. The book includes examples from Quran and from other literary, journalistic, literary, legal, descriptive, instructional, scientific, medical, and advertisement texts for discussion. The book provides an understanding of translation as a process and a product and deals with stylistics, stylistic literalness, translation and punctuation (where the conjunctions of Arabic and English are discussed), translation of cohesion (in which translation of reference, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion are discussed), and Jargon translation. This book is different from its predecessors as the book provides discussions on Source Texts (ST) and a detailed analysis of ST and Target Texts (TT) and also puts translation theories into practice.

BORG, C. 2022. *A Literary Translation in the Making: A Process-Oriented Perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.

A part of Routledge Studies in Literary Translation Series, *A Literary Translation in the Making* deals with both cognitive and social processes of translation as it brings Cognitive Translation Studies (CTS) and literary translation together. As the subtitle shows it is a process oriented book and examines literary translation through actual process (in situ) instead of a product point of view. The aim of the book is to unravel and show the chaos of drafts and

DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ab1 Translation Today, Volume 17, Issue 1

confusions of selection and choice that a translator faces. The framework of the book is based on CTS and it also uses ethnographic techniques like observation and interviews. The book is divided into seven chapters of which the first two provide the theoretical framework and context of the book. The book provides fresh and innovative insights and ventures beyond classical process-oriented research in the sense that it focuses on literary translation and its process by studying one translator at work. The book covers not only the translation but also the post-translation process (including the publication phase) and includes all of the drafts and fieldwork. The aim of the book is to analyse the translator at work of translating a literary text, to record the journey of a literary translation from first draft to its publication and to encourage the in-depth process studies for CTS and literary translation.

DEMIR, I. 2022. *Diaspora as Translation and Decolonisation*. Manchester & England: Manchester University Press.

Diaspora as Translation and Decolonisation analyses the concept of diaspora as an analyst category and investigates it theoretically and empirically to attempt an understanding of diaspora, not from the view-point of 'static topics' of homeland, identity, subjectivity or hybridity, but as involved in the process of decolonisation. The writer drifts the focus away from the ethno-centric diaspora and examines the role of empires in the formation of diaspora. Her focus in the book is to examine 'people, identity and power' instead of textual translations of diasporas or examination of literary texts of diasporas. The book, which is divided into five chapters, engages with a critical engagement with and goes beyond two dominant forms of diaspora theories, which the author calls, 'ideal type' and 'hybridity' approach to develop an understanding of diaspora as a critical concept. The attempt of diaspora to translate their identity, for the writer, results in the decolonisation not only of the Global North but also of the home that they left behind. Diaspora, in this book, is understood as a nemesis of collective amnesia. The analysis of the existing case studies and diaspora theories also questions the spatial and temporal limitations that the current case studies provide.

MUNDAY, J., PINTO, S. R. & BLAKESLEY, J. 2022. *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (5th ed.). New York: Routledge.

First published in 2001, this seminal work in the discipline is a course book for students, researchers, instructors and professional translators. The book outlines major theories of translation with key concepts of the discipline through a discussion of key texts as well as of case studies to further the understanding of the discipline. The book draws the necessary background of the discipline for a better understanding. Apart from all this, each chapter includes extra journal material for the reader to explore. Each chapter ends with assignments or topics of discussions as well as additional sources for the readers to provide them with tools to begin to carry out research on their own. The book includes figures and tables that are updated with each edition. Structure wise this fully revised and updated edition is same as the old editions but includes some new content like 'exploration boxes' which provide links within the text for online material and 'discussion and research points' to encourage exploration and understanding of the issues and theories of translation.

GUZMÁN, MARÍA CONSTANZA & GÜRÇAĞLAR, TAHIR ŞEHNAZ. (Eds.). 2022. *Negotiating Linguistic Plurality: Translation and Multilingualism in Canada and Beyond*. Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

The book is an attempt to bring into focus the contemporary linguistic scene where the monolingual paradigm is asserting itself and multilingual practices re-emerge. This book contains eight articles that appear as chapters. The book, through these articles, focuses on various approaches, notions and frameworks as well as lived, social and institutional aspects of linguistic plurality which includes language policy and planning, language and transformative justice, minority and minoritised languages, translational zones and plurilingual territories, and language heritage, rights and nation-building. This is achieved through the interplay between linguistic plurality and translation, where translation is viewed as a social experience and not just related to texts and narratives.

Bronner, Y. & Hallisey, C. (Eds.). 2022. *Sensitive Reading: The Pleasures of South Asian Literature in Translation*. (D. Shulman, Trans.). California: University of California Press.

The book is an exercise in reading translated texts, songs and their performances, stories, sculptures, and Ghazals from various languages. Every chapter in the book includes a translated text, the translator's note and essays about reading or as the book calls it 'sensitive reading' of that text. The book carries 15 translated texts and is divided into six units. The inclusion of essays about reading the text is evident of the fact that the book is an exercise in reading, observing and seeing. The first unit titled "Retelling Nala" has three translated texts about Naishadha from Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam. Naishadha is another name for Nala and this unit is related with the story of Nala and Damayanti. The second unit entitled "What does it mean to be "Modern" in Telgu?" includes "Khwaja the Dog-Whisperer". "Touch". and "A Street Pump in Anantpuram" and five other poems of Mohammad Ismail. This unit showcases the works in Telugu language that are rooted in South Asian modernity. The third unit called "The Love of Music and the Music of Love" includes a part of Telugu text *Chivakan's Gem* concerning with a music contest and two songs of Muttuswami Dikshitar performed by T.M. Krishna and Eileen Shulman. It shows the interplay between song and poetry. The next unit, "The Vagaries of Love" includes an unknown artist's "Desire and Passion to Ride to War". an excerpt from Kamban's Tamil *Ramayana* "Ravana visits Sita at Night in the Ashoka Grove". and "When a Mountain Rapes a River" from *Vasu's Life*. These selections showcase a description of a sculpture and the retelling of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. "Ten on the Wild Boar" and "Three Poems About Love's Inner Modes" make the second last unit titled "Love's Interior Landscapes: Four Selections from Tamil Sangam Poetry". The last unit comprises of "A Hundred Measures of Time" in Tamil by Nammalavar and two Ghazals one Persian and other Urdu by Hafez and Ghalib respectively and is titled "Who am I When I am Reading You?"

SAUSSY, H. 2022. *The Making of Barbarians: Chinese Literature and Multilingual Asia*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

The book is divided into five chapters, earlier delivered in the form of lectures for Chinese Cultural Subjectivity, at National Chengchi University and a conclusion that provides frames, edges and escape codes. The book deals with the literary scene of China before 1850. The framework of the book is comparative but this perspective is not the common prevalent Eurocentric idea of Comparative study in which the foreign texts were translated into Chinese and other languages. The book discusses and analyses the understanding of literary translation, adaptation and appropriation in the Chinese literature before it came in contact with European literature.

RUNDLE, C., LANGE, A. & MONTICELLI, D. (Eds.). 2022. *Translation under Communism*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

A sister volume to *Translated under Fascism*, *Translation under Communism* is divided into four parts and 14 chapters and studies the history of European Communism through the perspective of translation. The parts are titled as "Introduction". "Soviet Union". Communist Europe". and "Response". The editors believe that the analysis from the perspectives of translation can bring out better understanding of the totalitarian regimes such as fascism and communism. This book, in its course, takes into account essays on the European Communisms of Soviet Union focussing on Russia and Ukraine, of Yugoslavia focussing specifically on Slovenia, of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Poland. The book is situated in the socio-political context and analyses the books and texts alongside the policies and selection of the books to be translated to understand the nature of those regimes.

BEATTIE, P., BERTACCO, S. & SOLDAT-JAFFE, T. (Eds.). 2022. *Time, Space, Matter in Translation*. New York: Routledge.

The diverse fields of editors (a medievalist, a linguist and a comparative literature scholar) hint upon the interdisciplinary nature of the book. It is part of *The New Perspectives in Translation and*

Interpreting Studies, a series engaged in analysing the changing nature of these disciplines. Translation, in this book, is not just limited to a linguistic category but an attempt has been made to understand translation in action beyond languages and texts. The categories of time, space and matter are considered as natural territory of translation and this idea, it is argued, broadens the spectrum of experiences known as translation. Time, in this volume, is seen in historical and contemporary contexts of heterolingualism and language contact; space in alternative ways of conceptualising, theorising and creatively using translation and matter in the material and material contexts of translation. This understanding of time, space and matter is used to investigate the process of knowledge transfer and creation, interpretation and reading, communication and relationship building. The aim of this understanding is to build an interdisciplinary pact between Translation Studies and relationship building.

BUSH, R. 2022. *Translation Imperatives: African Literature and the Labour of Translators*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The book focuses on the politics of doing and reading literary translations in African literature citing examples of the case studies from the Heinemann African Writers Series and from the literary workshops organised in Cameroon in 2019. The book with its structural, sociological, and materialistic frameworks discusses the multidimensional labour and art of literary translators of Africa. This book with close readings, fresh archival materials, interviews and observations of literary translation workshops deals with topics like African literary studies, world literature, comparative literature and Translation Studies as well as debates like multilingualism, race and decolonisation.

CHARTIER, R. 2022. *Won in translation: Textual mobility in early Modern Europe*. (J. H. Pollack, Trans.). Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

This book is divided into four chapters which deals with publishing, translating and adapting of different texts, from these

three texts are from Spanish and the fourth one is a Portuguese adaptation of *Don Quixote*. The translation of the texts, in the book, are followed and studied in their plurality, meaning what they gained in their journey. The first chapter deals with a text titled *Brevísima relación de la destruyción de las Indias* and its "seven lives". The text is followed, described and analysed in its seven translations between 1552 and 1810-20 in different countries and languages for various ideological, political and literary reasons. The second chapter is engaged with the *Fuente Ovejuna* by Lope de Vega, a "comedia." The third chapter is about translation and the author is intrigued by the question whether a translation tells more about the text or about the translator and the society for which it was translated. The text in question is translation of *Oráculo manual to L'Homme de cour*. The last chapter deals with the adptation of the first translation of *Don Quixote* into Portuguese as a play. In the Epilogue, the writer proposes to read Jorge Luis Borges's short story "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*" from six perspectives. These six perspectives are biographical, autobiographical, allegorical, experimental, aesthetic reading, and bibliographical.

Bausch, M. 2022. *Intercultural Transfer of Management Practices of German MNC to Brazil: The Interplay of Translation and Recontextualization*. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.

This book, from the case study of German MNC in Brazil, shows how the MNCs enable intercultural transfer of Management Practices to the subsidiaries. There are two practices for it: the translation of those practices and the re-contextualisation of the practices in accordance with the receiving context. This thesis shows interplay between these two practices to investigate the process of these kinds of transfers. This process is studied in four stages of preparation, translation, recontextualisation, and instutionalisation. The result of the study is that the process of intercultural transfer is complex and multi-level which differs on individual, team and organisational levels. The research in the book is done in four parts where the transfer process and change is studied from Scandinavian institutionalist translation, the complexity of the Brazilian context is discussed from various cultural views, the impact of transferred managerial practices is studied and an attempt is made to contribute

in consideration of self-reflexivity in intercultural qualitative research.

PIETRZAK, P. 2022. *Metacognitive Translator Training: Focus on Personal Resources.* Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book is a part of Palgrave Series in Translating and Interpreting and studies the process and pattern of the translator education programmes from metacognitive skills and market conditions. The focus of the book is to discuss the notion of metacognition within the framework of Translation Studies. The personal resources mentioned in the subtitle are the metacognition skills like self-regulation, self-reflection, self-monitoring, self-assessment and self-feedback and the process of translation and translator training are examined through these skills.

SHABANI-JADIDI, P., HIGGINS, P. J. & QUAY, M. (Eds.). 2022. *The Routledge Handbook of Persian Literary Translation*. New York: Routledge.

The Handbook of Persian Literary Translation offers a detailed analysis of the Persian literary translation through discussion of translations of Classical and Modern Persian literature into English as well as trends of Persian literary translation in practice. This handbook comprises of twenty articles by as many writers about doing and reading translation across various genres like poetry, Persian ethics, short stories, drama, prose fiction and also discussions about challenges of translating Indo-Persian translation as well as the cultural and linguistic contribution of these translations. This book with its nature and scope can prove to be a helpful resource for scholars, students and general readers of Persian literature and Persian literature in translation.

ATHANASOPOULOS, P. CH. (Ed.). 2022. *Translation Activity in Late Byzantine World: Contexts, Authors, and Texts*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

This book is an extension of a conference organised on the Palaeologan period of Renaissance in Byzantium in which the texts were translated mainly from Latin and Arabic into Greek. As the

title and subtitle suggest the book is about the context of translation, translators and texts that were translated during that period. The translated texts analysed here are related to administration, politics, education, theology, philosophy and science from that era. The book is spread across in eighteen articles and discusses the translators, their aim, skills and personalities. In addition, the book also contextualises the translations in the historical aspects like transcultural, political and ecclesiastical history of these Byzantine translations along with history of science and ideas.

SAXENA, A. 2022. *Vernacular English: Reading the Anglophone in Postcolonial India*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

The book holds the debate of English language and its position, shape and use in India especially with a past of colonisation. The book looks at English as a vernacular language of people's democracy through hope and frustration and as a law, a touch, a sight and a sound. The language is studied through linguistic experience and different strategies of reading. The English language is studied as a democratic object, as a promise and hope of equality, as a desire, as a sound object which offers 'a decolonial lineage of a mother tongue in English' and as a visual (in movies). These assumptions and conceptions are studied through texts, essays, characters, movies and voices of dissent.

TAYLOR, C. & PEREGO. (Eds.). 2022. *The Routledge Handbook of Audio Description*. New York: Routledge.

This handbook is a detailed analysis and discussion of Audio description from various perspectives, supported with tables and figures. This handbook is a helpful resource for the students, researchers and for any person who is interested in doing or studying Audio Description (AD). It contains eight parts and 38 chapters. The first part "Accessibility and Blindness" analyses the idea of accessibility, presents a social and legal framework and covers a profile of the end users of AD. The second part "A Theoretical Overview" presents the processes of production and reception through cognitive approach, discusses narratology, linguistic and

textual aspects as well as the culture specific elements of AD and presents the rendering an image in audio description. The third part "Audio Description Sectors" deals with application of AD in fields like theatre, opera and dance, screen, museum and church. The next part "Stakeholders" deals with the contribution of professionals, broadcasters, service providers and researchers in AD. The fifth part "Innovation and Technology" describes the use of software and receptor tools and artificial voices in AD as well as personalisation and automation of AD. One of the chapters in this part deals with the use of AD in videogames. The sixth part "Practices" covers the fields of audio introduction, audio subtitling, audio description translation (with a pilot study in Chinese/Spanish) and also AD for non-blind. The second last part "Training" is about university and in house training of AD. The last part "National Case Studies" contains studies of AD in countries like United States, Canada, Australia, Russia, Brazil and Slovenia.

Li, S. 2022. *Travel, Translation and Transmedia Aesthetics: Franco-Chinese Literature and Visual Arts in a Global Age*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book is a study of four writer-artists who migrated from China to France and established themselves in the French and Western literary circles. These writer-artists are François Cheng, Gao Xingjian, Dai Sijie and Shan Sa. They crafted their works mostly in French, but their works showed great influence of Chinese culture, linguistic idiom and poetic imagery in their works. The book is divided in six chapters in which the first chapter is introduction and the sixth is conclusion. The second chapter "Diverse Forms of Travel and Translation in Franco-Chinese Fiction" is about the various forms of travel that all the writers-artists undertook and used in their works and also about the relationship between travel and translation. This chapter specifically focuses on François Cheng's work L*e Dit de Tianyi* and its English translation as *The River Below*. The third chapter "Translingual Rewriting and Transhistorical Fabulation" engages with classical Chinese literary tradition and Chinese historical narratives. Understanding the idea of Fabulation through Robert Schole's work, this chapter analyses the rewriting of Chinese romance by Cheng, the use of supernatural beings by Shan

and the use of human-animal sexuality and proper exotic names by Dai along with their narrative and writing styles. The fifth chapter "Sinograph, Calligraphy, and Novelistic Aesthetics" deals with how Dai, in his writings, has given a makeover to Chinese script and also deals with how the use of linguistic and visual traits of Chinese has helped these writers re-negotiate the boundaries of text and image. The fifth chapter "Translational (Anti-) Storytelling and Transmedia Aesthetics" is about the treatment of cinema by Dai Sijie and Gao Xingjian's works.

CLASSEN, A. & SANDIDGE, M. (Eds.). 2022. *Communication, Translation, and Community in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period: New Cultural-Historical and Literary Perspectives* (Vol. 26). Berlin: De Gruyter.

This book is the 26th volume of Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture series. As the title and subtitle suggests, the book explores the notion of communication, translation and community as understood in the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. Their search for new cultural-historical and literary perspectives is based on language and in the 19 articles discussion is based on various historical, religious, literary, political and linguistic sources.

HADLEY, J. L., TAIVALKOSKI- SHILOV, K., TEIXEIRA, C. S. C. & TORAL, A. (Eds.). 2022. *Using Technologies for Creative-Text Translation*. New York: Routledge.

A part of Routledge Advances in Translation and Interpreting Studies, *Using Technologies for Creative- Text Translation* is about the use of Machine translation in the field of literary translation. The aim of the book is to create a new paradigm for innovation in literary translation and the eight chapters of the book deal with various forms of machine translation involved in literary translation. The book discusses the use of technology in pun translation, the neural machine translation for bilingual e-books, the ability of Google Translator to translate metaphors, the use of Google, DeepL and Microsoft Bing to translate Polzin's *Brood*, the use of hypertext in the polyphonic translation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Apart from

this, the book also contains a discussion about the role of awareness and attitude about the machine translation and how the digitalisation changes the notions of authorship and copyright.

***

About the Author

Jatinder Kumar

Jatinder Kumar is a PhD Research Scholar (UGC SRF) at the Department of English, Punjabi University, Patiala.
Email: iamjatinder94[AT]gmail[DOT]com

Cite this Work:

Kumar, Jatinder. 2023. An Annotated Bibliography of Select Translation Studies Books Published in 2022. *Translation Today*, Vol. 17(1). 187-198.
DOI: 10.46623/tt/2023.17.1.ab1

Contributors

Abdulrahman Qadan, Senior Lecturer of Linguistics, Department of English, An-Najah National University.

Ammu Maria Ashok, Research Scholar, Amity School of Liberal Arts, Amity University Haryana, Gurugram.

Ara Khatun, Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur.

Chandrani Chatterjee, Department of English, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune.

Chythan Ann George, Research Scholar, Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies (CALTS), University of Hyderabad.

Ekrema Shehab, Associate Professor of Translation Studies, Faculty of Humanities, An-Najah National University, Nablus-PA.

Eligedi Rajkumar, Assistant Professor, Department of English Literature, School of Literary Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

Jatinder Kumar, Research Scholar, Department of English at Punjabi University, Patiala.

Jharana Rani, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kalahandi University, Odisha.

H S Komalesha, Professor of English, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Kharagpur.

Kulveer Kaur, Research Scholar, Department of English, Punjabi University, Patiala (Punjab).

Sriparna Das, Assistant Professor, Translation Studies at the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Translation Studies (CALTS), University of Hyderabad.

Udaya Narayana Singh, Chair-Professor & Dean, Faculty of Arts, Amity University Haryana, Gurugram.

Umesh Kumar, Department of English, Banaras Hindu University.

Utsarga Ghosh, An independent researcher and translator.

Articles submitted for consideration of the Board will have to be in English. Translation Today will seriously consider the possibility of publishing material in Indian languages, or a multilingual edition of the journal in future. Articles should be preferably between 4000 and 5000 words in length. Unpublished contributions will be preferred. While submitting pieces already published elsewhere, the author must mention the fact as well as get permission to reproduce the same. The submission should be by e-mail. Please use .doc or .txt format. Graphics could be in JPEG or PNG format. All articles should carry a 100-word abstract and a short bio-note of the contributor.

Style and Conventions

The journal prefers the American Psychological Association (APA) style. Diagrams and figures should be suitable for photographic/scanner reproduction. Drawings should be in black font. Lettering should be of draughtsman standard and large enough to remain legible where the figure requires reduction in size. Tables should be typed on separate sheets.

Author's Benefit

All the contributors from India would receive a complimentary copy (print) of the journal and overseas contributors would receive an e-copy of the journal.

Reviewing System

The Translation Today follows double-blind peer-review policy. At first, the received paper is reviewed by the editors. If the editors find the paper suitable for the journal qualitatively, then the paper is sent to the experts who review the paper based on the guidelines of the Translation Today. The decision of accepting a paper for publication depends on the review report. Please see the Review Response Sheet in the NTM website.

Publication Fee

Translation Today does not charge any submission, processing or publication fees at any stage of publication.

Copyrights

Copyrights for the articles/translations/book reviews are retained by the National Translation Mission, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore.

Plagiarism

Though all submissions are put on rigorous plagiarism check, the responsibility of originality of content rests with the concerned authors. A paper found with plagiarized content (major or minor) will not be considered for reviewing or publication.

Open Access Policy

For the wider dissemination of knowledge, all published articles of the Translation Today are freely accessible online. The back volumes of the print edition are also available on payment.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the articles are solely that of the authors, and the editors or members of the Editorial Board are in no way responsible.

ISSN 0972-8740 DOI: 10.46623/tt E-ISSN 0972-8090

In this Issue

Editorial

Tariq Khan.....ix

Articles

- (Re)mapping the Inter-Philosophical Trajectories of Feminist Translation Theory and Praxis
  Jharana Rani Dhangadamajhi 1
- Translating Women in Sethu's Malayalam Fiction into English: The Issue of Cultural Gaps
  Ammu Maria Ashok & Udaya Narayana Singh 21
- Retranslation as Re-vision and Self-Reflective Criticism: A Comparative Analysis of Two Translations of Agnisakshi from Malayalam to English by Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan
  Chythan Ann George & Sriparna Das 45
- The 'Translated' Cityscape: A Study of Select Satyajit Ray Films
  Chandrani Chatterjee 63
- Investigating the Translation of Arabic Conventional Implicatures into English
  Ekrema Shehab & Abdul-Rahman Qadan 83
- The Role of Translation in Disseminating Feminist Thought in Telugu Context
  Eligedi Rajkumar 113
- Punjabi-English Literary Translation: Challenges and Possibilities
  Kulveer Kaur 135

Interviews

- Translating the Margins: An Interview with V. Ramaswamy-the Translator Spy
  Utsarga Ghosh & Umesh Kumar 157

Book Reviews

- Modern Bengali Poetry: Desire for Fire
  Reviewed by Rifat Ara Khatun & H S Komalesha 177

Annotated Bibliographies

- An Annotated Bibliography of Select Translation Studies Books Published in 2022
  Jatinder Kumar 187

Contributors 199